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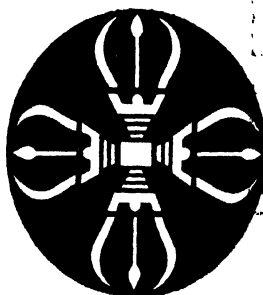




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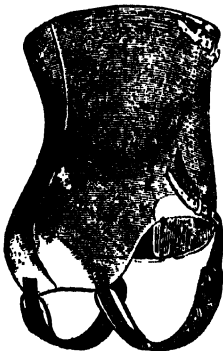
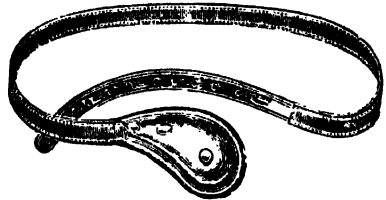
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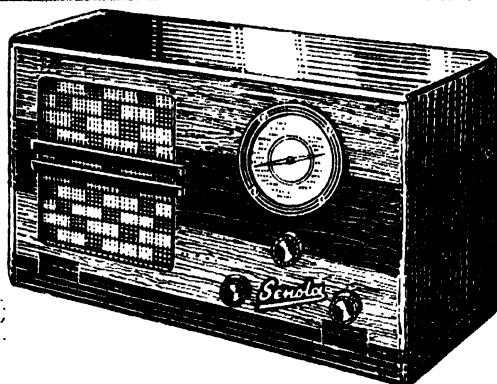
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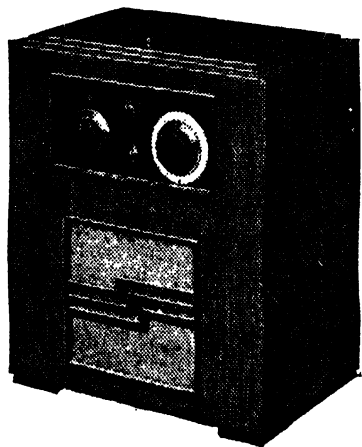
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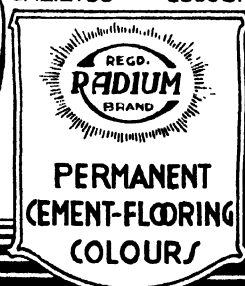
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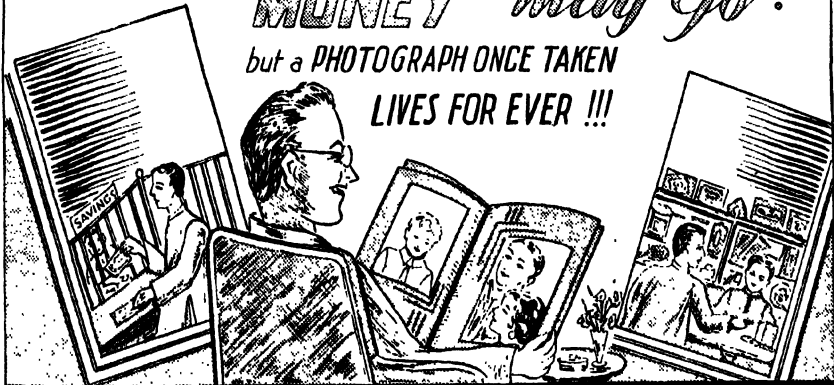
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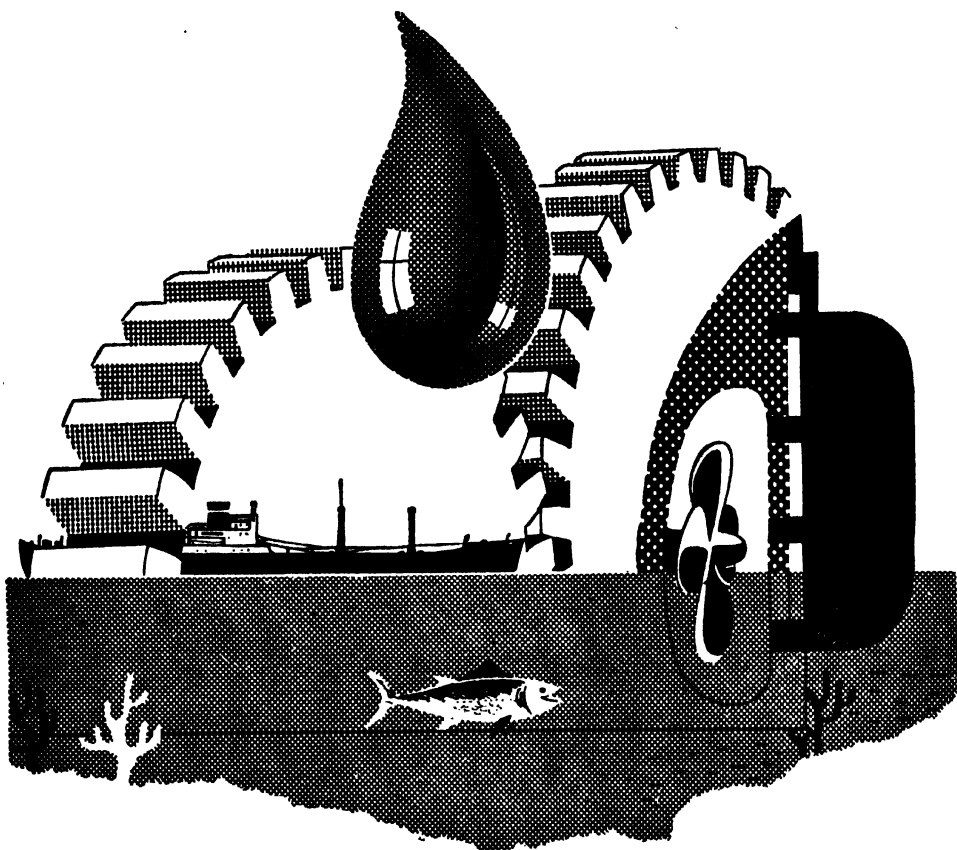
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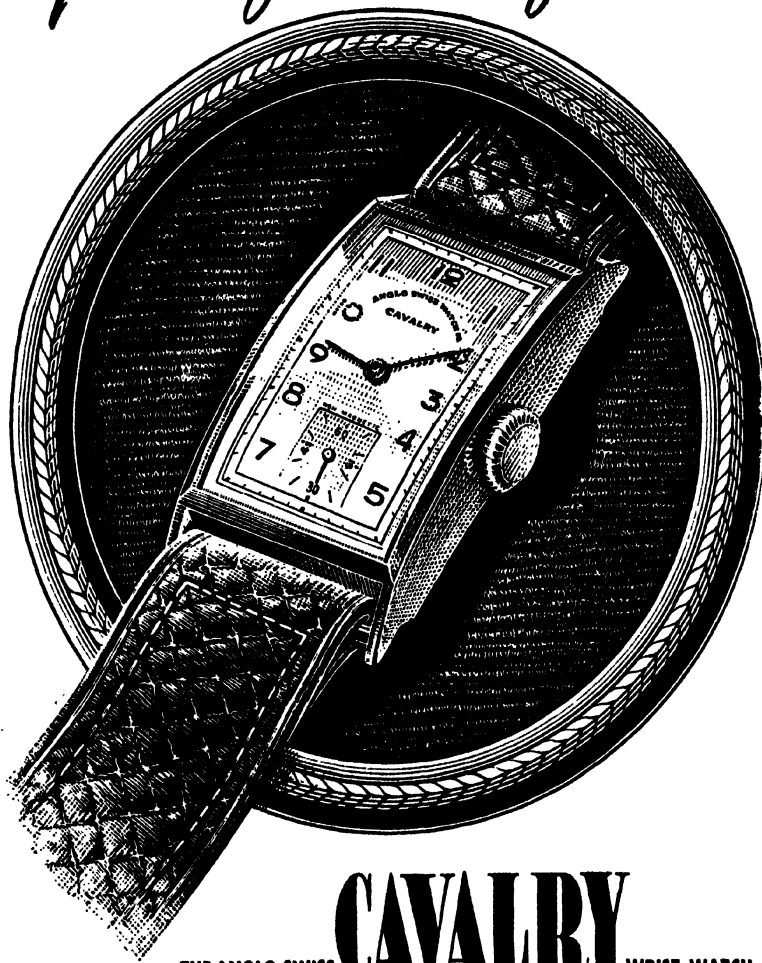
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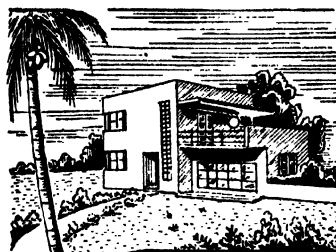


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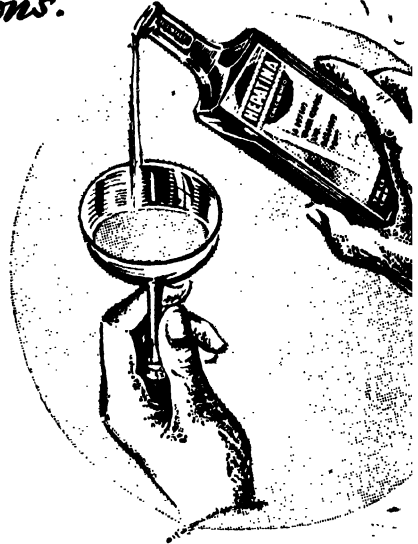
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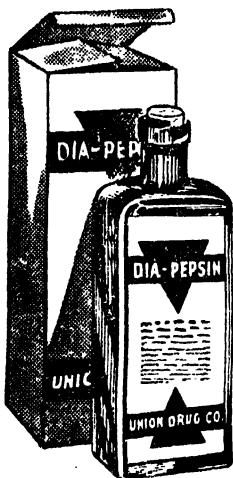
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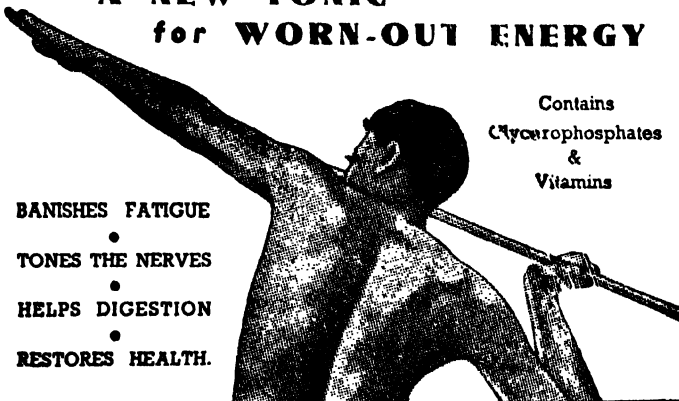


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JANUARY 1949

No. 1



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Dear Joe,

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I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer La Champagne.

The books are in the hands of Waldo and Whitmond (?). They are nearly ready.

I am well, getting better—and all right till I see you next week.

Ever yours in the Lord  
Vivekananda

\* See next page for Facsimile of this Letter.





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Dear Sir. The Sun = Knowledge  
the strong water = work. the lotus = Pure  
the serpent-yoga. The Swan = The Self.  
The motto = May the Swan (the Supreme Self) lead  
us that. It is the Rio-Grande. How many  
like it? May the Swan lead you with all  
there anything.

I am located in the city of New York, by  
the French Quarter in Champagne  
The books are in the hands of the public & the  
they are nearly ready.  
I am well getting better — and all right  
— till I see you next week

Yours in the  
Swami

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, 1 JANUARY 1924.

Today is the first of January when the *Kalpataru* (the wish fulfilling tree) celebration takes place at the Yogodyan at Kankur-gachhi. Arrangements for special worship and offering have also been made at the Math. Devotees are coming since early morning ; the more so because it is a holiday. After visiting the shrine of the Master they have all collected in the room of Mahapurush Maharaj. He is also joyously talking to them on various subjects. A devotee, after saluting Mahapurush Maharaj respectfully, sat down saying, 'Happy New Year.' Mahapurushji smilingly, replied, 'Happy English New Year. Our New Year begins with the 1st of Vaishakh. Today the New Year begins for the English. Just consider what a change has come over our mentality thanks to the influence of English education and culture of a hundred and fifty years. We are about to lose our own distinctiveness and nationality. The predicament is due not simply to our being a subject nation. We have been subjects for a long time. The Mahomedans could not destroy our national character and culture even after holding us in subjection for eight or nine hundred years ; but such is the fascinating power of Western civilization and the skill with which the West has spread their ideas among us that we even fail to understand that their aim is to destroy the roots of our spiritual faith and culture. As a result of this, such a big nation has become so quickly Westernized in all respects. Slowly our mode of thinking also has undergone a radical change. The greatest harm that has been done is that the entire Hindu nation has by degrees lost faith in the vedic tradition. The general attitude has come to be this, namely, that whatever is contained in the *sanatana dharma* is all false and imaginary and whatever is being said by the standard-bearers of

Christianity is absolute truth. Their design was gradually to convert the whole Hindu nation into Christianity ; but it did not come to pass thanks to the Divine will. All spirituality in the world will perish if the perennial vedic tradition is lost ; it is for this reason that the Divine descended in the form of Ramakrishna to save the *sanatana dharma*. And he began his spiritual practices from that image-worship, the worship of God in a concrete form, which the Christians and the Western educated society had been deriding as idolatry. His practice of all kinds of faiths and his success in them have amazed the whole world. As a result, great minds of the West even have reverentially acknowledged the uniqueness and superiority of the vedic tradition in India. As a reaction to this the gaze of even the blind Indian imitators of the West has been turned upon the life of Sri Ramakrishna and along with it upon their own religion. The atmosphere of the country began to change since the appearance of the Master. Indians have begun to recover the self-confidence which they lost. The superhuman *tapasya* of the Master has awakened the *atmashakti*, power of Atman, of India. You will now find that unprecedented progress will be made in all departments in India. Swamiji has said that spirituality is the backbone of India. That backbone broke ; that is why she became weak and fainthearted. The Master has made the backbone once more healthy and strong. Now India will amaze the world, not by her spirituality alone but by achievements in all fields.

The Master has awakened that *brahma-shakti* (the Energy of Brahman) which is governing the manifested universe. Humanity will gradually understand what he has accomplished for the world. Ah ! Blessed are we that we lived with that perfect image of

the Divine, and could see, touch, and serve Him. His touch has made our lives blessed. Those who have not had the good fortune of seeing Him, but who have made Him the ideal of their lives and are shaping their character in accordance with His ideas will also be blessed. The Master's ideas are infinite—He is the Lord of the three worlds, an ocean of uncaused mercy, and the wish-fulfilling tree. He will give one whatever of these four ends of life, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* (virtue, wealth, enjoyment, and Liberation or Knowledge) one will sincerely pray to Him for. What more shall I say about Him?

The devotee: On this day he became the *kalpataru* (the wish-fulfilling tree), and bestowed grace on so many devotees.

Mahapurushji: Why today alone. He is the *kalpataru* for ever. His only mission was to bestow grace on people. We have seen before our eyes how many people used to receive His grace always and in how many ways. Of course, He bestowed His grace on many devotees at a time on this day at the Cossipore garden. For that reason this day has a particular significance. The devotees understood from the happenings of that day that he was an ocean of mercy.

The devotee: Maharaj, were you present there that day?

Mahapurushji: No. Why I alone, none among the *sanyasi* disciples of the Master was present there at the time. The Master was then seriously ill, and great *vairagya* (spirit of renunciation) filled our hearts. The Master's body was so sick that we used to nurse Him by turn for twentyfour hours of the day and night. The householder devotees used to come in the day according to their convenience and made arrangement for medicine, diet, and expenses etc. But we took upon ourselves the entire responsibility of nursing Him. Along with this nursing went tremendous spiritual practices. The Master also used to encourage us in that respect. He used to call each one

of us separately to Him and gave instructions as regards *sadhana*, and he would also enquire about the meditation and visions of each. At night Swamiji would light a *dhuni* (a log-fire after the traditional fashion of the *sadhus*), take us with him, and practise meditation and *japa*. Often there would be great singing and *kirtan*. The whole night would be spent in great joy, in nursing the Master by turn and in meditation and spiritual practice. Because we used to keep awake in the night, nearly all of us would sleep for a while in the afternoon after lunch. That day after lunch we were sleeping in a small room adjacent to the hall below. For the first and only time the Master came down on that day to take a little walk in the garden. The Master was slowly going towards the gate of the garden, when Girish Babu fell at his feet; prostrating himself before Him he began to recite a hymn of adoration with folded hands. Listening to the words of Girish Babu, conveying his wonderful love and faith the Master went into *samadhi* even while standing. The devotees, seeing that divine ecstatic mood of the Master, began to shout in joy 'Victory to Ramakrishna,' and saluted him over and over again. Gradually the Master's mind came down to the semi-conscious plane. Then, gazing at the devotees with eyes full of mercy he said, 'What shall I say? May you all be enlightened.' No sooner were these words uttered, a wonderful current of bliss began to flow in the hearts of the devotees. They began to shout 'Victory to Ramakrishna' and saluted Him repeatedly. He also touched nearly all of them, one after another, in that state saying, 'May you be enlightened.' At His divine touch each one of the devotees began to have wonderful experiences within. Some became absorbed in meditation, some began to dance in joy, some began to cry, and some began to shout 'victory' like mad persons. It was an event which can hardly be imagined. And the Master was standing surveying everything with delight. The

noise broke our sleep. We raced to the spot to find that all the devotees were surrounding the Master and behaving like mad men, while He was affectionately gazing at them with His sweet smiling face. When we reached the spot, the Master's mind had returned to the normal plane; but the devotees were still overpowered with the intoxication of that delight. Afterwards we came to know everything by making enquiries of the devotees. All said that they had wonderful spiritual experiences at the touch of the Master, and that the influence of the mood lasted for a long time. His touch could not but have such an effect. He is God Himself. But even on that day he did not touch one or two persons. He said to them, 'Not now, you will have it afterwards.' One can well understand from it that nothing can be achieved before the time is ripe. One must wait for the right time.

The devotee: But, Maharaj, by mere wish He can turn an individual's mind Godward and make the heart pure. Why doesn't He do so? If His mercy depends on devotional practices, how is it that He is called an ocean of unconditional mercy?

Mahapurushji: Yes, what you say is right. One says it just because one can't do without saying it. But in truth He is not to be found by means of spiritual practices. Besides, one cannot even say that He is to be found, for He is the true Self of all individuals—He is the Inner Self of all beings. Spiritual practices only remove the obstacles which obstruct an individual's inward vision. Then an individual knows his true Self and becomes one with the *antaratman* (Self within). It is just because He in His mercy is liberating an individual from the pall of ignorance, he feels an urge in the heart to find Him—this is His grace. But everything appears to happen according to law and certain uniformity. Just as to make a child grow into adolescence in a trice is an unnatural and vain attempt to achieve an end by sheer force, so also is the case with it. With the unfold-

ment of its mind and body, a child gradually grows into a boy, a youth, an adult and an old man. In the same way there are levels and sequence of emergence of Divine sentiments in the mind of an individual. What develops easily and naturally is alone right and has good effects. Of course, God can liberate all in a day by mere wish, for He is all-powerful. But He never does it. He is ordering the universe by a uniform law; He does not allow any deviation from it except for rare unusual reasons. There is not the least doubt that He is an ocean of unconditional mercy. If you could but know even a little how great is His grace and mercy for His creatures, the question whether or not He is an ocean of mercy could never find a place in the mind. That He descends on the earth in a gross corporeal form, moved by the misery of His creatures and in order to save them, is the greatest proof of all that He is an ocean of mercy. He is ever Perfect. He has nothing to gain or crave for. Yet moved by mercy He engages Himself in work for the salvation of individuals. There is only one kind of *vritti*, tendency, in His mind, which is Mercy or Love. Can one convey through words how merciful He is? It is a thing to be felt. Man is mad with play; does he ever try to feel His mercy? The Master used to say, 'If an individual tries to approach God by a step, God moves ten steps towards Him.' So great is His mercy. Never doubt His mercy; never even allow a thought of that kind to invade your mind. Go on calling on Him with love; your heart and soul will be filled with His mercy. Can these experiences be had in a day—or of a sudden? Gradually you will feel and have everything. Could we also understand properly how great is God's mercy for His creatures, if we had not seen the Master. He used to become restless and even cry in order to bestow His mercy. Who wants His mercy sincerely? Man is mad with the pleasure from sensate objects. Who ever wants Divine Bliss finds it also.

# INDIA AND THE WORLD

BY THE EDITOR

The *Prabuddha Bharata* starts a new year with the present issue. It has been a fairly long existence, fifty-four years to be exact, the longest, in fact, for any English monthly in existence in India. Has it been worthwhile? On an occasion like this the mind inevitably turns to the past, not only to seek inspiration but to draw what lessons it can from it. A good look after is necessary for a good look before, necessary because one who can look back into the past is able to see far into the future. Fifty odd years is a sufficiently long stretch of time to put things in a perspective. But these fifty years have been exceptional. Old landscapes familiar for centuries have disappeared. New tides, strong and swift, sweep across the planet. An epoch has gone by, and the scene is transformed beyond imagination. It will be profitable, therefore, to enquire in the light of the present, whether the cause it was created to serve was worthy and whether it is of value still. The success or its lack it has had in its task is not for us to determine, even if that were possible. But if the idea to which it is dedicated proved right in the past and is still of supreme moment for today, we are sure to take the lesson to heart.

Fifty and odd years ago when Swami Vivekananda founded the magazine to speak the language of an *Awakened India*, India, to all outward appearance, was far from awakened. She lay inert and asleep. Was it not the sleep of death? Many thought it so. The efforts and noise made by the revivalists and reformers looked like pathetic attempts to resurrect the dead into life. They reminded many of the insignificant and convulsive movements of a decapitated torso. Indian culture was apparently in the iron grip of an inevitable death. The West had pushed its way all around the globe and was arrogantly proclaiming its power and supremacy. It had laid us flat and almost turned our life upside down.

It required an exceptionally courageous heart and an almost unbelievable farsight even to dream at the time that a new dawn was near, and that India would not only rise, at no distant date, as a strong, free, and united people, but would stand on a pinnacle of greatness never attained before.

But, still more amazing, the voice of Indian Destiny proclaimed that her revival would not be after the manner of the emergence of the irresponsible sovereign nation-states of Europe, worshipping the idol of a collective human power which reveals itself, not as love, but as organized brute force. 'India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the Spirit; not with the flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love—the garb of the *sannyasin*; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging bowl. ...

'I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as light before me—that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her Throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.'

Do the above words strike us as singularly prophetic and significant today, yes; but at the time they were addressed in 1893 by Swami Vivekananda to his admirers at Madras, and also afterwards till only yesterday, the vast majority of our own people were disposed to regard them as the frothy talk of a wild paranoiac. They were not to blame, for the assertions could hardly be reconciled with the facts as they saw around them then. Yet the outlines of the picture of India that he saw are getting daily clearer with the passage of time, even to men of common understanding—like mountain shapes suddenly emerging into view from drifting mist. We have begun to talk generally, though vaguely, that India

is a country of Destiny. Are we clear what it means?

Most reformers and nationalists in those days and also in the recent past thought that the only chance of our getting even with the West was to fashion ourselves after its image and to master the Western technique of raising the collective power of man to an hitherto undreamt-of pitch. Japan went right ahead with this godless plan, and when she flattened Russia with her military flail early in this century, all Asia echoed with cries of *sabash*. Was not here an answer, right and adequate, to West's lust for power and brutality? But the Swami, in spite of his admiration for the discipline and patriotism of Japan, warned India to choose her course wisely, for if India succeeded in throwing overboard her broad conception of culture, and only made herself a carbon-copy of the West, she would inevitably come to grief. And if India died, who would live?

'Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than the power of doing; the power of love is infinitely greater than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are deluded.'

The problem of India, the Swami felt, was also the problem of the world. She was destined by reason of her ancient wisdom to play a capital part in the future civilization of mankind. In the give and take of cultures she has infinitely more to give than she has to receive.

## II

The Swami claimed to preach nothing new, but he was far from a conservative or a reviva-

list. He was a radical who gave an up-to-date and authoritative interpretation of the broad truth of our culture. He spoke with the accents of authority derived from the experience of Truth. He saw things as a whole, and felt that the first thing necessary for us was to recover the true sense of our tradition in order that we might build up a free and just society on the basis of a spiritual conception of life. This was essential not only for India's resurgence but also for the reconstruction of humanity. Unless we recognize the facts of spiritual life and those transcendent values which give meaning to our struggles and sufferings we shall never be able to set limits to the operations of power politics which today threaten to destroy civilization.

India touched a new low in her decline, because she had lost the broad conception of her culture and became partial. But the ancient fire was not dead; it only slept and burned slow under cover of ashes. It was up to us to stoke it up again into a mighty flame. Two things were necessary to do this. First, the country must be flooded with the noblest truths of the Spirit. This would restore faith and dignity to her people, without which no creation of a just and liberal society is possible. Vedanta must become practical and come to the field, the factory, and the market-place. Vedantic culture in its highest form was in the past limited to a small minority of population; its conceptions had not been realized in widespread practice in society and politics. Yet, the values it had realized and the spiritual tradition it had maintained have persisted into our day. Aided by the new technique of our time these values and this tradition must be reasserted with a greater power and on a wider scale. Every individual must be given opportunity not only to develop to the best whatever gifts nature has endowed him with but to realize the divine truth that is in him or her.

Vedanta, of course, would form the basis of Indian reconstruction, but she must also get even with the West in matters of science,

technique, and intellectual supremacy. The two basic qualities of a true and genuine culture are (1) its ability to understand the facts of life as they exist, and (2) its capacity to transcend these facts by a spiritual conception of life. Unless we recognize the facts as they are we shall always practise escapism of one kind or another, fatal, in the long run, to the society and culture. The West has been practising in the modern era a sort of escapism by refusing to recognize the facts of individual and of political life as they exist, for its secular movements in the nineteenth century proceeded on the assumption that freedom, peace, and happiness of mankind could be permanently secured by a political or economic scheme, whether it is of the Marxist or the liberal democratic variety. But the lust for power and mastery is inherent in man, and will find new expressions always, until and unless it can be countered and limited by a spiritual conception of life. Similarly India in her days of decline thought that she could concentrate on spiritual perfection in disregard of the brute facts of life. One cannot jump at perfection any more than one can jump out of one's skin. A good philosophy is aborted by lack of vigorous action and objectivity. The facts of life as they exist cannot be bypassed, but must be squarely faced.

India must modernize her laws and institutions, her economy and polity, with the help of science and technology, for without such efficiency she will ever remain a prey to the West's lust for power and domination. Without it, she will not be able to pull herself out of the poverty and stagnation into which she had fallen and will fail to reassert the values of her culture on a wider scale. But science and technology must be pressed into the service of a spiritual idea. The aim of life is not to cultivate the senses and make the best of this world, though comfort and power have definite places in the order of values (*purushartha*) and in a total scheme of life (*varmashrama dharma*). Vedanta and

technology, spiritual aim and intellectual supremacy, will be the two legs on which a spiritual and modernized Indian society would stand. Without any one of these it would be lame and come to grief. It is only a synthesis of this kind that can fulfil the hearts' desire of humanity for peace and happiness and significant living.

The West has solved the problem of material power. Science has touched upon the very foundations of physical reality; this limit cannot be transcended by scientific method. Physics has reached the bottom with the splitting of the atom. Further discoveries will be concerned with filling out the 'white spots' in the map. There are no more continents to discover. For ages India has maintained a spiritual tradition which has touched the very bottom, so far as religious and ethical queries are concerned. This spiritual experience of unity cannot be transcended, it can only be interpreted and understood in new terms and ways as analytic knowledge of objective reality marches forward. This tradition is in perfect agreement with the findings of reason in the objective sphere. The spiritual quest as also the scientific are searches after the same truth, in different planes. They have met today in the sense that science has relinquished the search for absolute truth to metaphysic. The truth of fact is ultimately also the truth of value, for the aim of life is, in the final analysis, knowledge (*jñana*).

India alone, therefore, offers a suitable field for the synthesis of science and religion. It has always recognized two sources (*pramana*) of truth, the temporal and the timeless. Truths of fact are derived from sense-perception (*pratyaksha*), while the truths of value are premises derived ultimately from superconscious perception (*shabda*). The two kinds of premises together provide the basis of rational and intelligent living.

The emergence and failure of humanism in the modern West teach us two lessons. Humanism emerged as a movement to preserve

the moral values of Christianity, apart from its spiritual climate, for the secularized culture of the 'scientific' West. Historical Christianity had failed because of its inadequate world-view, its lack of sound psychology, and its cutting adrift of religion from an empirical basis. Religion became a dogma, and instead of becoming a power for good and a means for the transformation of character, which is the essence of religion, it became fanatical and persecuting, suppressing free thought and conscience, and attempting to make men good by coercion. Official Christianity came into conflict with science and lacked clear knowledge of the essential truth of religion. It was innocent of the psychological facts of human personality.

But humanism has failed in its attempt to preserve moral values by detaching them from their spiritual roots, for it made the opposite mistake of believing that human life can be made peaceful and happy without a discipline or goal in which an individual might transcend himself. This left a vacuum in men's minds, an emptiness and craving, which in the absence of right satisfactions, seized upon false ones, like nationalism, fascism, and communism. Secular humanism was a romantic version of materialism in as much as it believed that if we made the life of men materially well-off, they will find it good enough in itself. But this was a mistake, for physical comfort not only suffocates spirit, but provides very short-lived satisfaction. Apart from it, it believed that by a sheer act of the will on the part of the individual either through reform of society or through education, or through moral exhortation, man can be changed and can be made to abandon the evils of politics and the lust for power out of which all social evils grow. A secular conception of life which aims at making the best of this world offers no real inducement to the will to act morally in all situations and in crises. One can be a villain whenever it suits one.

### III

The experiment of secularism in the West has failed—that is how, at least, some of the best minds of America and Europe think. So there is a growing and insistent demand from men who stand on top in so many fields of learning and research to put back the secular superstructure of Western civilization back on to its spiritual foundations. But the question remains whether the West has a spiritual foundation, broad and strong, to bear the weight. Has the West a spiritual tradition requisite for the purpose? Let the West speak through its own spokesmen.

Last year the British Broadcasting Corporation organized a series of remarkable broadcasts on the subject of Western tradition. Europe at present stands divided into two hostile camps roughly along the Stettin-Trieste line, the line of the Iron Curtain. This division, it is assumed, goes deeper than political or economic differences, and is held to rest upon fundamental cultural divergences. This has focussed attention upon those elements of unity in the West which make it possible to speak of a Western civilization as distinct from the Eastern. While Russia and her satellites share science and technology in common with the West, the latter is held to differ from the former in its loyalty to certain basic values. (Spain is an exception, it would appear.) These values are claimed to have formed a consistent Western tradition for centuries.

The distinguished contributors to the series, however, did not come to any agreement about the precise character of the Western tradition, though they spoke with one voice in telling what it is that they valued in a civilization.

The series of talks were summed up by Bertrand Russell and Arnold Toynbee. Their observations are worth noting. Bertrand Russell takes the view that science and tolerance are distinct products of the modern West, which may be said to have begun around 1500 A. D. They distinguish Western Europe



from the rest of the world, and they alone offer the only hope for its survival. Toynbee, on the other hand, maintains that the hope of Western civilization rests with religion, and, further, that there is no Western tradition at all, properly speaking. He, of course, admits that there is a Christian tradition, but finds it hard to reconcile Christopher Dawson's (one of the contributors) equation of Western and Christian tradition with the facts as he sees them. Toynbee says that the West lacks a genuine tradition in the sense that it has definitely decided in favour of a particular way of thinking and valuing and acting, and has adhered to it consistently throughout its history. His observations appear to us to be very revealing.

Toynbee points out that the speakers on the Western tradition agreed on the value of the individual soul, but there was not the same agreement on the part played by individual liberty in it. Some thought that it had been a capital part, while others held that the prevailing current in Western history was not towards individual liberty but towards totalitarianism. The speakers have not agreed further on what the essence of the Western tradition is. Does it stand for individual liberty, or is its tendency towards totalitarianism, or has not the West thrown Christianity overboard in favour of technology?

Toynbee pronounces his opinions on these conflicting views as follows: 'I have to confess that I find myself less in agreement with the majority of the speakers, who seem to be inclined to take it for granted that our Western civilization is the flower of human achievement than I am with Canon Demant and Mr. Taylor, who are both critical of our Western way of life—though this from two very different points of view.'

'Is there such a thing as "the Western tradition"? There is, I am sure, a Christian tradition; but when Mr Christopher Dawson said that the Western tradition was

nothing more or less than the tradition of Christendom, I found myself for the first time that I can remember disagreeing with him. I wish I could agree with him about this, above all things, but I cannot reconcile his equation of "Western" and "Christian" with the facts as I see them. I do not believe there has ever been a Western tradition. I think there has always been a western battlefiled, on which a Christian tradition and an incompatible pagan tradition have been fighting for dominion over Western souls. The story of that battle is Western history as I see it.'

Toynbee, in his analysis, arrives at a remarkable conception of the fundamental dynamic factors of history. While he denies that the West can claim the Christian tradition as its own, he shows profound insight in regarding history as a drama of the fight between the *deva* and the *asura*, the divine aspiration and the demoniac urges in man. This brings him into perfect agreement with the age-old Indian conception of history as a fight between the god and the titan for dominion over men's souls (*devau bhuta-sargau loke asmin daiva asura eva cha*). These are the two types of civilization. The struggle in the collective human sphere is again no more than a repetition on a wider social scale of the fight between God and Devil in the soul of man, the varying fortunes of which make the warp and woof, the changing pattern and colours of the unfolding fabric of civilization. History is not a story of selfishness (whether of individuals, groups, or classes, or races) as Nazism and Marxism have tried to explain dogmatically with a pretentious jargon; it is the record of the vicissitudes of a Divine Idea trying to impose its pattern on an apparently intractable material.

The observations that Toynbee has made are worthy to be taken to heart. The laws and the free institutions of Europe developed in the moral climate formed by Christianity.

But the West has tried since the beginning of the sixteenth century to cut its culture adrift from its spiritual soil. The shock of the two world wars and the present sky darkening with the clouds of a third, have however made it clear that technical progress in a secular climate becomes destructive of liberty and civilization.

#### IV

Seen in this light, there does not appear to be any fundamental divergence between the Eastern and the Western civilizations of Europe, for both are godless and secular. The active barbarism of communism is matched by the passive, unrecognized barbarism of capitalism, nationalism, and racialism, which go on grinding masses of men as pitilessly as any openly godless scheme. The West has loved liberty at home, but has not thought it a right commodity for export. Its brutal face and clubs and claws are well known all over the globe. The lip-service which the West pays to God (*namayaṅna*) is calculated to hide its brutal activities at home and abroad. The Russian system is essentially a product of the West, secularized by faith in the divine right of sensation. The communist threat is a boomerang on its return course, shot earlier by Western thought. The West seems powerless to resist by arms and dollars the mighty strides of the Russian colossus, for the people behind the Iron Curtain are not only impelled by hunger but also inspired by an ideology that fills their heads with a straight-cut, understandable philosophy, however defective and false that may be. The West has nothing to offer similar in kind and effectiveness; it is not only divided at home by mounting class antagonisms, but is inwardly crushed for lack of a faith that can stand its ground against the challenge of secularism without intellectual evasions of any kind.

This vacuum in the hearts of men, to fill which they turn to desperate means, can only be fulfilled by a liberal faith resting upon a rational and verifiable basis. This, as we see it, India alone can contribute, provided she

remains loyal to her thousands of years of consistent tradition, which is, perhaps, the most remarkable episode in the annals of any race, or people, or civilization. The value which we attach to the individual and which is for us the true test of a civilization will remain a sentiment, as likely as not to be respected, if it is not grounded upon a truth with which we can make contact as an object, though in this case the 'object' forms also the subject. Christian tradition has proved narrow historically and can survive if only it is liberalized to become acceptable to a rational mind.

It has become a fashion to say that religion lies outside reason. This is generally misunderstood to mean that religious experience belongs to a realm in which the writ of reason does not run. This makes way for fantastic notions and claims, which have justly been suspected by the scientific mind. The essence of rationalism is objectivity. When it is said that religion is outside reason it is meant that religion is a matter of concrete experience, though of an order other than what our senses make us aware of.

Indian tradition of spirituality has maintained a perfect balance between reason and religion. It recognizes the facts of life as they exist and it also gives a spiritual interpretation of life capable of transcending these facts. It takes life as a whole, and so its conception of existence is integral. It is this tradition that supplied the power with which India has achieved her political freedom. Mahatma Gandhi's great contribution was that he accepted politics as a fact and transcended it by a spiritual conception. The artistry of his life has been commented upon. It was so in fact, for a transcendental spiritual aim imposes a pattern of harmony on life and gives it the beauty of a supreme object of art.

The eyes of the world are on India, we say. Surely the West does not seek to draw inspiration from a carbon copy of its civilization. It has sensed something different and of an abiding value in Indian culture. What it is we

have hinted at above. It is this idea which lies at the back of the *Prabuddha Bharata* and which it has tried to bring all these years to the fore. It might have been ridiculed in the past, for then our eyes were dazzled by the fierce

light from the West. Today the tide is turned, and it will be well with us and the world if we take the lesson to heart and work out the destiny reserved for us. *Vande Mataram.*

## THE PLACE OF SANSKRIT IN THE NEW CURRICULUM

BY DR ROMA CHAUDHURI

Education being the very back-bone of a nation, it is in the fitness of things that immediately after the attainment of the long-cherished goal of independence, Indian educationists have in right earnest taken up the problem of adult education and the reorientation of our entire educational outlook and policy. In West Bengal, an experts' committee has been set up by the Government to recommend a new curriculum of studies for primary and secondary education. One of the main problems that confronts the committee is to work out a happy compromise between the conflicting claims of different subjects, like languages, on the one hand, and science and economics, on the other. As it is, an Indian child is committed to the study of at least four languages : lingua franca, mother tongue, English, and a classical language. We do not know as yet what would be the final decision of the Government in this respect. But we are alarmed to find that some responsible non-official bodies (like the All-Bengal Teachers' Association) have voiced the opinion that the curtailment of the classical language, Sanskrit (or Arabic), is the only means of relieving the over-burdened students of an unweildily lengthy language course, and thereby letting them free to devote more time and energy to the study of practically useful subjects, like science and economics. Such deplorable attempts to reduce Sanskrit to the level of a mere optional subject, even in the Matriculation course, have been made many a time

before. But what strikes us as specially strange is that even to-day, even in Free India, a single voice should be raised against the inclusion of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject in the Matriculation curriculum—however great the difficulties be. The over-lengthiness of the language-course should be rectified by other means, such as, depth rather than length of syllabus, more attractive methods of teaching and the like. But the unceremonial exclusion of Sanskrit will undoubtedly make the cure worse than the disease. It is really regrettable that even some prominent educationists have taken it into their heads that Sanskrit being altogether useless in the modern practical world of ours, it would be foolish to insist on the compulsory study of a 'dead' language from a false sense of nationalism. But apart from nationalism—which, after all, is not something to be deprecated—the practical utilities of the study of Sanskrit are so very obvious that it seems unnecessary to dwell on them at length. But it is a strange paradox that what is obvious often escapes our notice.

However, here we propose to point out very briefly just a few of those great utilities of the study of Sanskrit. First, Sanskrit is the basis, the very life-blood of nearly all the Indian languages, like Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Kanarese, and so on. If we take the case of Bengali specially, it will not be an exaggeration to say that it is the eldest grand-daughter of Sanskrit. Chaste Bengali

is practically but a simplified form of Sanskrit with the verbs changed. Most Bengali words are nothing but Sanskrit ones, original or derivative. Bengali spellings, too, are so. The rules of Sanskrit grammar regarding conjunction of words, compounds, gender, case-endings etc. are still today followed in Bengali grammar in many cases. Hence, any one wishing to learn Bengali well and scientifically must of necessity have at least some knowledge of Sanskrit, too. Further, at present, with the introduction of Bengali as the medium of instruction, a determined effort is being made by specialists in different branches of study to replace the commonly used English terminology with a Bengali one. Most of these newly introduced technical Bengali terms have been borrowed from Sanskrit, or derived from original Sanskrit words. The first part of '*Bengali Technical Words*' published by the West Bengal Government illustrates this. Thus since both, a student desiring to know his mother-tongue well as well as a specialist striving to frame a suitable terminology in Bengali for making it a world-language, must have some knowledge of Sanskrit, how can one characterize the study of Sanskrit as useless?

Further, from the point of view of our every-day life, too, the study of Sanskrit is absolutely necessary. Even today, all our religious rites and rituals, like worshipping the Deity, offering oblations, marriage, obsequies etc. are conducted through the repetition of Sanskrit *mantras* and hymns, from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Grihya-sutras* etc. But if we do not possess at least that much knowledge of Sanskrit as to understand clearly the meaning of those *mantras* etc., what is the use of merely repeating them parrot-like after the priests or from books? According to the *Grihya-sutras* and *Smritis*, it is a grave sin to utter *mantras* without understanding their meaning. But are we not committing this very great sin day after day? In our daily (*nitya*) religious ceremonies, like repeating

the *Gayatri mantra* early in the morning, performing the *sandhya* ceremonies etc., as well as in occasional (*naimittika*) religious ceremonies, like marriage etc. we are equally guilty—e.g. what a pity and what a great shame that during the wedding ceremony, the holy vedic *mantras* that unite the hearts of the couple appear to them, in most cases, to be but a string of meaningless words! Hence, every one who professes himself to be a Hindu must possess at least that much knowledge of Sanskrit as would enable him to understand Sanskrit *mantras* etc. Some may hold that it is not at all necessary for us to take the trouble of learning Sanskrit in order that we may understand the meaning of our *mantras* etc. for, these may be easily translated into Bengali. But, in that case, in order that the *Vedas* etc. may be correctly translated, the study of Sanskrit should be encouraged. Also translation, however accurate or literal, can never replace the original, either in sense or in sound. Further, the Hindus take the *Vedas* to be eternal, but if they are willing to take a mere temporal translation as the authoritative basis of their religion, then the *Vedas* become non-eternal. Hence, it is strange that a Hindu, claiming the *Vedas* to be eternal and ever-true and the very foundation of his religion should yet be averse to the study of Sanskrit. Hence, the study of Sanskrit, the very vehicle of Hindu religion, is essential for all Hindus.

Sanskrit is the vehicle, not only of Hindu religion, but of the entire Indian culture and civilization. The great truths discovered by our forefathers in all the different branches of knowledge, like religion, philosophy, ethics, economics, and politics, science, arts etc., have, from time immemorial, been expressed and preserved through the medium of Sanskrit. It is no exaggeration to say that Sanskrit literature is by far the richest literature in the whole world. Its great wealth—both in number and variety—really staggers imagination. First, take the case of number. In the British Museum and India Office Libraries

in London alone there are thousands of Sanskrit printed books. Throughout the continents, too, numerous Sanskrit books have so far been collected. The number of Sanskrit books printed in our country is not less than several lacs. Besides these, there are manuscripts, the exact number of which it is impossible to determine. Thousands of such manuscripts have been collected in India and abroad. But many more thousands have been destroyed through the ravages of time, through the vandalism of foreign rulers, through the carelessness of people. Many lie hidden even today in temples and underground shelters, and in the houses of private individuals. If we add all these up, the total will make any one dumb with wonder. It is indeed a great pity that neither the authorities nor the public are making any serious attempt to unearth and collect this great national wealth, or publish these invaluable treatises containing the lofty thoughts of those master minds of old.

Just as in number, so in variety of topic, too, Sanskrit literature easily surpasses any other known literature in the world. Even a bare description of this requires a separate volume. We here mention only the bare names of ten main divisions of Sanskrit literature : philosophy and religion, *Smṛiti*, *Purāṇa*, epics etc ; belle literature, rhetorics and prosody, grammar and philology, lexicons, economics, politics and sociology, sexology, sciences, fine and practical arts. Under each of these, there are branches and sub-branches, far too numerous to be mentioned here by name even. Thus, in both numerousness and all-pervasiveness of contents, Sanskrit literature stands unrivalled indeed. It is sheer foolishness to urge that we have no need of this unimaginably vast treasure that we have so very fortunately inherited from our ancestors, simply because it is old. We are eager to spend much time and energy for learning many European languages in order that we may know at first-hand their cultures and civilizations. But we do not think it

worth-while to learn Sanskrit and know something about our own glorious culture and civilization. Again, the Western nations themselves are encouraging the propagation of Sanskrit learning, but we still seem to be quite indifferent to it. It is by no means false nationalism to insist on the study and propagation of Sanskrit. For, the first necessity for a slave nation on gaining freedom is to regain self-confidence and national pride—confidence that does not stultify but exhilarate nation-building activities, pride that does not retard but accelerate national progress. Towards this end, also the study of Sanskrit is an invaluable help.

The above is a very brief account of only a few of the outstanding merits and essential utilities of the study of Sanskrit from the standpoints of learning, religion, and culture. Considering all things, the demand that Sanskrit should be made compulsory for every Hindu child for only five years (classes V to X) is, we think, a very modest one. If we had our way, we should have recommended it to be made compulsory upto the Degree course. In any case, even within five years, students may acquire a good working knowledge of, and also a real taste for, Sanskrit, if the curriculum be chosen wisely, and—what is more important—improved methods of teaching adopted. The most necessary thing here is to bring about a complete change in the outlook of the student community regarding the study of Sanskrit. It is still to-day regarded as a matter of good joke—as something that is practically and economically useless, and so not to be taken at all seriously. Even a few years ago, Bengali was also in the very same sorry predicament. But through the efforts and co-operation of the authorities and the public, the picture has changed completely in course of a very short period. We earnestly appeal to the authorities—Governments and Universities—to take similar steps immediately to restore Sanskrit,—the life-blood of our culture and civilization, no less of world civilization—to restore

it to its pristine glory, to its place of honour in education and society, so that every citizen of free India, whatever be his creed or community, thinks himself duty bound to learn

well this great language, 'this language of Gods,' that has ever served as the only connecting link between province and province of this vast sub-continent of ours.

## NIVEDITA'S PERSONALITY\*

By DAYAMOI MITRA

'Of all persons who truly loved India. Sister Nivedita was the foremost,' writes Abanindranath Tagore, India's most famous artist and founder of the new school of Indian art, 'she lived in a small house at Baghbazar where we used occasionally to visit her. It was she who sent Nandalal (the famous artist) to Ajanta. I met her first at the residence of the American consul where a reception was held in honour of Okakura. Nivedita was one of the invited. She came draped all over in a white robe and with a necklace of *rudraksha* beads round her throat, everything about her suggestive of a sculptured figure in white marble. ... How superb she looked at the time I have no language to describe.' And on another occasion, 'I saw her towards evening in a party at Justice Holmwood's, in the midst of a huge gathering of the fashionable aristocrats of the city, where wives of rajas, maharajas, big white officials and their *memsahibs* were present, clad in all their finery, many of them celebrated beauties, with their novel coiffure, gay rich costumes, the whole making a gorgeous display of riches and fashion and physical charm. She had the same white dress of a nun, the same *rudraksha* beads, her hair not altogether gold, but mixed gold and silver, tied up in a knot, she stood there among them, the most beautiful of all. It seemed as if the light of the stars had paled all at once before the moon—the fairest of

*memsahibs* lost her charm of beauty beside her. At once the whisper went round: "Who is she? Who is she?" You all talk of beauty. You know I have an ideal pattern of beauty before my mind's eye—that beauty which I saw in Nivedita. For me, the beauty of Mahashveta in *Kadambari*, the beauty carved in 'moonstone' had taken shape in Nivedita. She had an indefinable divine halo round her. How can I give you fittingly the impression of that beauty? I don't see any one like her; there is no parallel to set beside her. After her death, I secured a photo of her from Gonen Maharaj, which I always kept on my table. One day Lord Carmichael asked: "Who is this?" "This is Sister Nivedita," I answered. "Oh, is she Nivedita?" was his surprised exclamation and the next moment, without even asking my permission for it, he snatched it up, held it secure under his arm and was gone. If I had that photo in my possession, still, I could make you understand what perfect beauty is. Like moonlight on marble, she looked so charming, so quiet, so self-possessed. To talk with her was to be inspired with the courage of self-confidence."<sup>1</sup>

This is how Nivedita appeared to the enraptured vision of our greatest artist and painter, Abanindranath. Everyone who has seen Nivedita will, of course, know that her beauty was more beauty of the soul than of

\* Miss Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), born 1867, died 1911.

<sup>1</sup> From the Bengali of Abanindranath's *Jorashankor Dhare*.

physical appearance. In fact, it was the soul within her that illumined the body, for earthliness in any form, mere physical beauty, can never emit the radiant glow that she shed around her. It required an artist of Abanindhanath's spiritual vision truly to discern and appreciate this fact. But his picture is complete only when we read it in the light of the exquisitely-worded character-sketch of Nivedita written in Bengali by the poet Tagore himself. He wrote: 'Surely I feel that one who has seen her and known her has seen with one's own eyes the glory of man's soul in a living human body, the glory that declared its presence in all its indomitable energy by entirely shattering to pieces the gross integument in which it is wrapped. To see this with one's own eyes is surely the greatest good fortune that can ever befall a human being. We consider ourselves blessed because in Sister Nivedita we saw with our eyes the invincible soul of man manifest before us in a human body.'<sup>2</sup>

The poet then goes on, in his powerful way, recounting to us her many qualities of head and heart and concludes by comparing her life of exemplary self-sacrifice to the *tapasya*, the austerities performed by Sati herself for her Lord Shiva. 'The Sati in Nivedita gave her life as a sacrifice to Shiva that resides in the heart of men. One day, the great Lord himself, came in disguise to Sati when she was undergoing the severest *tapasya* and tried to dissuade her: "Pious Lady," he said, "I pity you. You are so lovely and beautiful yourself, but he, for whom you are practising such austerities, is poor and old, ugly, and deformed—his ways and manners, too, are queer and eccentric." To this the ascetic Sati gave the answer: "Whatever you say, may be true, but still my mind is steadfast in single-minded devotion to him and to him alone."<sup>2</sup> Like Sati's love for her Lord, Nivedita's love for India was 'steadfast

in single-minded devotion.' She loved us in spite of our poverty and miseries, our failings and short-comings. And because of this great devotion, Tagore points out, she never suffered from the inevitable reaction of certain other types of men and women of the West who come to live amongst us, carried away perhaps either by their admiration for a great Indian or the greatness of our philosophy. They come expecting a great deal; they cannot love us as we are. 'There admiration for India is conceived in the darkness of their brain only—it cannot stand the broad light of day.' This is perfectly true, but we should not also forget how much of hard preliminary training was at the back of Nivedita's firm attitude of devotion to India. It came to her not only through her respect for a great Indian, her readiness for absolute self-sacrifice, but also through a touch of the kind which our ordinary consciousness does not make a reckoning of.<sup>3</sup> She was singularly fortunate in this.

<sup>3</sup> Of this she writes: 'My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn, and how short was the time for learning to be, and the first of lessons doubtless is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught.... And then a time came when one of the older ladies of our party, thinking perhaps that such intensity of pain inflicted might easily go too far, interceded kindly and gravely with the Swami. He listened silently and went away. At evening, however, he returned, and finding us together in the verandah, he turned to her and said, with the simplicity of a child, "You were right. There must be a change. I am going away into the forests to be alone, and when I come back I shall bring peace." Then he turned and saw that above us the moon was new, and a sudden exaltation came into his voice as he said, "See! the Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also with the new moon begin a new life!" As the words ended, he lifted his hands and blessed, with silent depths of blessing, his most rebellious disciple, by this time kneeling before him..... It was assuredly a moment of wonderful sweetness of reconciliation. But such a moment may heal a wound. It cannot restore an illusion that has been broken into fragments. And I have told its story, only that I may touch upon its sequel. Long, long ago, Sri Ramakrishna had told his disciples that that

<sup>2</sup> From the Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore's *Parichaya*.

Born of Irish parentage and thoroughly English in her education and upbringing, Miss Margaret Noble was equipped with the best of Western culture of her day, before she entered upon her career of teaching in London. She became very soon the guiding spirit of an enthusiastic band of bold experimenters in education, who were also earnest seekers of religious and philosophic truth. She had passed through several phases already in her attitude towards orthodox Christianity when she came into contact with Swami Vivekananda in London. Miss Noble disputed and argued long with the Swami before she got over her doubts and decided finally to devote her life to his work for Indian womanhood. Her brother, Mr Richmond Noble, wrote after she passed away: 'That my sister should have obeyed Swamiji's call was nothing wonderful, for I myself saw Swamiji and I know his power. One had only to see and hear Swamiji and to say to oneself "Behold the man." One knew he spoke truth for he spoke with authority and not merely as a scholar or as a priest. Swamiji brought certainty with him, he gave assurance and confidence to the enquirer. . . . It was certainty which led her to obey the call fearlessly, and once having obeyed without hesitation she never had cause to regret.'

Miss Margaret Noble was thus transformed into Nivedita, the 'Dedicated,' which was the name chosen for her by Swamiji. 'Noble' was her family name, which Swamiji's spiritual genius converted into Nivedita, and nobly

day would come when his beloved "Noren" would manifest his own great gift of bestowing knowledge with a touch. That evening at Almora, I proved the truth of his prophecy. For alone, in meditation, I found myself gazing deep into an Infinite Good, to the recognition of which no egoistic reasoning had led me. I learnt, too, on the physical plane, the simple everyday reality of the experience related in the Hindu books on religious psychology. And I understood, for the first time, that the greatest teachers may destroy in us a personal relation only in order to bestow the Impersonal Vision in its place.' *The Master As I Saw Him*—ch. The Awakener of Souls,

and devotedly did she live up to the significance of both these names.

Swamiji passed away in 1902, and everything seemed dark for a while. She had started her work in a tentative way in 1898, and as yet she could hardly make much headway, for the work was none too easy. She did not come to India like a Christian missionary seeking for converts. She was herself to live the life of a strict Hindu *brahmacharini* realizing the ideal in her own life and helping others to realize it. Anyone who knows orthodox India will at once understand the tremendously difficult task she had set before her. She had to steer her path carefully through old prejudices and superstitions and even perversities that misinterpreted her motives. It was a task which would have broken the spirit of many a reformer, less ideal-minded than she was. But she lived to triumph over all odds. Her school was a very tiny affair but the magnitude of its influence was great. Nature employs all her vast resources in hiding the growth of the tiniest of seeds that later grow into huge kings of the forest. Her work for the school was only the first step in the stupendous work of nation-building which she was gradually to confront. As it happened, there was a quick change of situation by the year 1905, and Nivedita felt an urgent call to serve the nation in as many ways as she could, apart from the work she was already doing for her school.

One might almost fancy that India, towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, was a vast power-house, an experimental laboratory where unseen forces were at work trying to find out the outcome of the meeting of the East and the West on its sacred soil. On the one hand we had the power-intoxicated, arrogant, self-conscious white element which considered India to be a land of benighted heathens, to be drilled and shaped into the pattern of the West, and on the other hand, we had another element, not very vocal then, which contained in it the potency of untold ages, the Indian *dharma* of true



synthesis, once more in the matrix, waiting to assert itself when the time was ripe. One cannot but point out that the East, for her own good, certainly needed the challenging stimulus of the West for bringing into birth all its potency of absorption and assimilation. It was necessary for this experiment that the West should come into intimate contact with the East to help the work of close approximation and identification of types, what scientists call a process of osmosis. An interpenetration of ideals in the best type of men and women was the objective goal of this experiment, and the successful type emerged in one corner of the country, producing personalities who accepted the West, but remained thoroughly Indian in outlook. Bengal was the diffusing centre of this new life-giving synthesis to the rest of India at this time, just as Bengal was the first province in India to go over the brink almost, in accepting Western culture. And it was here again that one first saw the singular phenomenon of a woman of the West, a typical Western of Westerners in the best sense, exchanging her personality for the personality of the East on grounds of pure idealism. Since Nivedita, the type has persisted and there have been, and still are, amongst us, some notable workers of the West who represent a harmonized blend of both the cultures. It was she, Miss Noble of the West, however, who first evoked the wonder and admiration of all by her complete absorption of the ideals of this country as Sister Nivedita of the East. She happened to be the most consummate of nature's type in this respect to show humanity the way it should go for the furtherance of the internationalization of the future, in which strict boundaries between the East and the West will cease to exist. The path is one of frank assimilation of ideals and not destruction of the best elements of one's inherited individuality; but it demands the highest qualities of manhood when it involves the foregoing of social privileges and political caste-consciousness. Sister Nivedita

was spotlessly free from all such racial or political bias.

In the early days of struggle against the British, before the dawn arrived, it was so easy for even the bravest patriots to lose heart and hope. Some of the foremost of our political leaders now, were then either in their cradle or lads in their teens, while the elders of their family were still stupefied under the miasmatic thralldom spread by the rulers from the West. As in almost every instance of Indian history, the power for regeneration was at work through spirituality, before the strength of it could also be felt fully in other spheres of life.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to complement the spiritual strength that was his Master's by making it practical on every plane of life. He was heir not only to the spiritual vision of the *rishis*, but he had felt within him the stirrings of a mighty national impulse that was to sweep away everything unmanly and degrading from the Indian nation that was to be. And it was Swamiji's burning patriotism that fed Nivedita's zeal for political activities. But Swamiji was sometimes misunderstood. He had nothing of the proverbial Western conception of the 'meek Hindu' about him, and that is why it is so easy even now for superficial observers from the West to couple his name with Nietzsche's,<sup>4</sup> the first person in their part of the world, whose ideas seem to offer a fanciful parallel to his vedantic idea of the divinity of man. In the days of terrorism and revolutionary propaganda the British Government, too, was in a quandary as to what to make of the personality of Swamiji. High-pressure politics came to the foreground of Indian consciousness after 1905, three years after his passing away, and, there-

<sup>4</sup> A recent illustration of this is furnished by Mr George Catlin's *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*. Mr Catlin, who suffers from an overwhelming burden of self-consciousness, writes: 'If there was something of a Kempis in Vivekananda, there was also no little of Nietzsche,—"a self-indulgent man", a "Spectacular populariser", etc.'

fore, his holding any positive opinion on such aspects of the matter was entirely out of question, though there can be no doubt that the *mantra* for the new national consciousness, in its broader aspect only, in which politics is not divorced from religion, was certainly provided by him before he finished his earthly career. Certain political opinions which Nivedita came to hold at this time were, therefore, her own personal reactions to the burning questions of the day.

But the goal she was working for was far above current politics. She was a visionary of visionaries in the inmost of her being. If she felt that it was necessary to oppose the evil effects of a foreign political system through extreme revolutionary methods she did it only as a part of the more elaborate programme that she had set before herself of teaching the Indian nation lessons of manly self-respect. The fire she wanted to set ablaze was not the fire of political incendiarism but a purificatory sacrificial fire that would burn out all the accumulated dross of slavery in thought and word and deed.

Nivedita was singularly possessed of those characteristics that could make her an ideal worker for our nation. To her great intellectual gifts, as a sociological thinker, for which she had a recognized place among scholars of repute, she added a fine quality of soul and character that is difficult to be met with in any part of the world. Above everything else, she had spiritual strength, which was the gift of her *guru*, and that helped her in understanding India aright. She studied sympathetically, with the eye of a visionary and a poet, and yet with a scientist's zeal, our truths, our arts, our architecture, our mythology, our philosophy, our customs, rituals, ethnology, history, folk-lore, plant-lore, star-lore, our great men, our small men, our worship of the One-in-all of the highest vedantic sage as well as our villagers' worship of serpents and stones and trees. North and South, East and West, she travelled everywhere, up and down the country, studying every nook and corner of it from rich

man's palaces to the cottages of the poorest of the poor. Nothing Indian was alien to her, and to everyone she was a loving sister, or as Tagore has put it, a loving mother, who loves even the errant ways of her children. She had the mother's own way of teaching us right from wrong but she would not tolerate the slightest of criticism from those who assumed a condescending or superior attitude to us. Those of our countrymen who echoed in a servile manner the adverse sentiments of foreigners regarding Indian unity and Indian culture, received a stern rebuff from her. Even the queerest small countryside custom, like worshipping the crossroads, had a meaning for her both as primitive custom as well as for its immense sociological significance, its civic possibilities of the future. For her the Indian past was not a dead past. She taught us to feel that it was still alive and her prophetic insight told us how to harness this strength of the past into the service of the future. On the Le Play-Geddes theory and what she herself brought to it, the depth of her spiritual vision, she could read the present in a flash and determine the process of all future development in the country. And what power and what light she imported into everything she wrote and uttered! Her very talk was literature. It was inspiration. It may be, here and there, she has made a mistake in matters of detail or read a custom wrongly, but such mistakes are never mistakes from an absolute point of view. To quote Tagore's words: 'Facts can be easily arranged and heaped up into loads of contradiction, yet men having faith in the reality of ideals hold firmly that the vision of truth does not depend upon its dimension, but upon its vitality. And Sister Nivedita has uttered the vital truths about Indian life.'<sup>5</sup>

She understood that there must be change in accordance with the changed circumstances of life in the modern age, but she was against

<sup>5</sup> From Tagore's introduction to *Nivedita's Web of Indian Life*.

all 'thoughtless, wilful, aimless, wrongly purposed change.' When talking of Indian womanhood of the future, she pointed out a truth, which all progressively inclined women of our country would do well to ponder: 'Shall there be new developments here? And in what direction? Change there must be. Shall India alone in the streaming destinies of *jagat*, refuse to flow on from form to form? But what changes we make shall be made freely, deliberately, of our own will and judgment, deliberately designed towards an end, chosen by ourselves. Shall we, after centuries of an Indian womanhood, fashioned on the pattern of Sita, of Savitri, of Rani Ahalya Bai, descend to the creation of coquettes and divorcees? Change there must be, or India goes down in the shipwreck of her past achievements. But new learning shall add to the old gravity and wisdom, without taking from the ancient holiness. Wider responsibilities shall make the pure more pure. Deeper knowledge shall be the source of a new and grander tenderness. This generation may well cherish the hope that they shall yet see the hand of the Great Mother shaping a womanhood of the future so fair and noble that the candle-light of the ancient dreams shall grow dim in the dawn of that modern realization.'<sup>6</sup>

In all her writings she persistently emphasized the idea, so necessary for the nation, that this great land of ours is the common home of all communities—Hindu, Mohammedan, Sikh, Parsi, Christian; for every one she is the *Mata Bharata*. She placed before us the ideal of a great synthesis, of which India was the living symbol in the past, and insisted that we act in the spirit of that ideal in the present, wedding history to geography, bringing the spiritual to the aid of the secular. And with this end in view she pioneered the cause of a synthetic study of every form of culture, in all its stages, from the most primitive to the most developed, so that nothing might escape our observation.

The key to her emphasis on this kind of synthesis of knowledge was directly derived from her study of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, who was a living synthesis of all religions, and, indirectly, of all true culture. But she had no patience with the idle *laudator temporis acti*. She hated all kinds of bungling compromise. For her, ancient wisdom has its application in the present, only when we understand both the present and the past with a scientist's knowledge of facts.

Similarly, her ideal of scholarship was a highly synthetic one. She wanted that heart, brain, and hand should all work together in the task of gathering knowledge. Emerson defined for all time the ideal of the American scholar in a famous address. Nivedita, too, has done the same task for us through her highly inspired writings, particularly in her two books, *Religion and Dharma* and *Civic and National Ideals*, though, unfortunately, her writings continue to be a sealed book to the youth of this generation. Years ago, she wrote in a letter to one who is now one of the foremost historical scholars of our country: 'Never be contented with the ideas and wisdom which are gathered in the study. We have other senses and other faculties besides those of language. We have limbs as well as brains. Use the body, use all the senses, use even the limbs in the pursuit of truth. If you want to understand India, visit first the great historic centres of each age. Turn over the earth and stroke the chiselled stones with your own hands. Stand in the spot where an event happened, even if no trace of its occurrence is still visible, . . . to understand the Buddhist *bhikkhus* go out and beg. To understand Aurangzeb, sit in the mosque of Delhi and pray there the prayers of the Mohammedans. Whatever you seek, bend every faculty on its achievement. What you believe—make yourselves to it as dough kneaded by the baker, as clay worked by the potter, as the channel to the water of the river. Make thought into sensation, sensation into experience, experience into knowledge and let

<sup>6</sup> *Civic and National Ideals*.

knowledge become character.' This is one of the noblest of intellectual ideals as it is spiritual in essence, for, though the expression may be modern, do we not catch in it echoes from Dakshinেশ্বর, where lived one with whom religion was nothing short of realization, with whom sense and symbol, knowledge and character, theory and life were all merged in one complete whole ?

In the mingling of stern scholarship with spiritual warmth Nivedita has no equal in modern times. We have many research workers now in history and other allied subjects but hardly any one who can seize great ideas behind masses of scattered details and present them before us in thoughts that burn and words that glow. Her writings which we are now forgetting should be placed in the hands of all Indian students of our universities, for without the inspiration that she gave, student life in India will fail to reach its ideal fulfilment. A life like hers can never have been lived in vain, and it would be the height of ingratitude on our part to make the new generation in India live in ignorance about her. She detested our political subjection and fought against it ; but she fought against something which was even more insidious than political tyranny—our intellectual and cultural thralldom to the West. This constitutes her real glory.

It has to be admitted with regret that great injustice was done to her memory by certain remarks of Mahatmaji himself, when recording his only interview with her, many years ago. Anyone who reads that account now will at once realize the palpable absurdity of that hastily formed notion. The place where he met her was not her own residence, which used to be a dark lane and a dilapidated house, far from the splendours of the heart of Calcutta ; and the life she lived was of a Hindu *brahmacharini*, no less rigorous than Mahatmaji's own. We are told that he corrected his impression later, but we do not know exactly in what terms he did so, or if he ever did it at all. We do not accuse him.

Such mistakes are human. This, at any rate, is true, whenever and wherever idealism is appreciated men and women all over the world will prize her memory, for, 'to know Nivedita', as our poet has said it, 'is to know the meaning of self-sacrifice, to have seen her was to have seen the god-life in human flesh and blood ;' and Tagore surely knew what he was saying, for he knew her intimately, collaborated with her in works of mercy and love and was a keen judge of personalities himself. To forsake home and make a stranger's woes one's own, is a sight which may not be rare, but so absolutely to be one-d as Sister Nivedita was with the country of her adoption as to consider even the very dust of it to be sacred, is a phenomenon rare in human experience. One remembers how she always kept a bit of potsherd (not old) picked up from the site of Nalanda and some sand-plaster from Sarnath on her table to help her to visualize the past greatness of India while she wrote.

Neither did she want any authority or position in our country for what she did, or herself to be taken as an example of the Hinduism she stood for. She was absolutely free from any taint of patronizing or 'bossing' Indian culture, a trait which has been found flamboyantly present in certain Western workers for the cause of India. She came to India as a humble learner at the feet of Swamiji and, though a woman of towering personality herself both in intellect and will power, to the last moment of her life she was still a little girl learning her lessons from the open book of Mother India. One can never forget the simple, unsophisticated look on her face whenever she visited Holy Mother or sat before Jogin-Ma, or other holy women of the Ramakrishna Order. And yet no one would ever understand from her talk or behaviour that she belonged to an order or a 'group,' however catholic that order may be. Glad only to lay down her life as sacrifice at the feet of her *guru*, who symbolized all that was best in Indian culture for her, she had no other thought but service to his people.

Always she was 'sister'—a sister for whom only India existed and no difference of caste, community, or religious or denominational differences mattered. She paid homage everywhere to sincerity and devotion to the cause of India, nothing else was of consequence to her.

Foreigners, English, French, Americans have noticed the importance of her contribution to our cause, and the life she led has been compared to one steady burning flame of intellectual and personal austerity. The late Mr H. W. Nevins wrote: 'It is as vain to describe Nivedita as to reduce fire to a formula and call it knowledge. There was indeed something flame-like about her and not only her language but her whole vital personality often reminded me of it.' She had no time for luxury of sentiment or spinning cobwebs of intellectual theories. It is not true that she was ignorant of the so-called 'un-idealistic' elements in Indian culture, but her sense of the relative importance of different elements in an active dynamic civilization was much more judicious than that of mere grubbers on the surface of past history. She was never given to confusing values like them.

Like Ezekiel in the valley of bones it was her part to utter the word of life over the bare-living skeletons and hear them stir. She put the issues before them very clearly: 'Find out from your study of Indian history what made India great in the past and why she is still alive, in spite of some debasing factors which ruined other old civilizations of the past? Be men. Get your facts straight. Read your history aright.' She had herself caught the heart-beat of real India, but felt that it would not be possible to make us fully alive without first creating tremendous *shraddha* within us for our great national heritage. Her foremost work of importance, therefore, was instilling this *shraddha* into the Indian mind, bringing off a fiery renewal of that faith without which we are lost. Strong in her own convictions, she felt like a thunderbolt—which was her chosen symbol for our

national flag<sup>7</sup>—on all weakness, all mean calculations of self, all surrender to low aims, all thoughtless servile echoes of foreign theorists on India.

It is no exaggeration to say that the finest men of our country of her time, especially of Bengal, whether a poet, or a politician, a statesman, a publicist, a painter, a scholar, a scientist, a historian, a social worker, whose names shine today in the beadrill of Indian history and will so shine for ever, are all more or less indebted to this spiritual daughter of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, and freely and gratefully have they acknowledged their debt to her. To have meant much, as she did, to men like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, or Jagadish Bose does not imply an ordinary person whom we meet everyday of our life. It was the golden touch of that great dream she dreamt of a resurgent India that made every sincere Indian heart acclaim her a true sister. Of the present leaders in the political field there are several who saw her and felt the charm of her magnetic personality. Netaji Subhas Chandra was a boy in his teens when she died, but we have it on record that her books, especially the splendid account she wrote of her Master, was a source of fruitful inspiration to him.

Following the footsteps of Swamiji she tried to make Hindustan 'strong', masculine 'aggressive',<sup>8</sup> and when we read her books we

<sup>7</sup> The thunderbolt-marked sent of Buddha at Bodhi-Gaya first inspired her to think of the *Vajra* as the fit emblem for the Indian national flag. She remarked: 'He who sacrifices himself for truth becomes as powerful as the thunderbolt.' The *Prabuddha Bharata* carries this symbol now on its cover. Sir Jagadish Bose adopted this, after her, as an emblem for his research laboratory in Calcutta. Both Hindu and Buddhist traditions of great moral strength lie implicit in the *Vajra*. The *Vajra* was made of Dadhichi's bones in Hindu mythology.

<sup>8</sup> The word 'aggressive' first used by Swamiji in this context need not cause compunction in our minds. Swamiji's forceful Carlylean use of that word is still misleading some persons to paint it 'in the colour of blood', which was not intended.

find how eminently she has succeeded in this endeavour. Her books will be regarded as classics as we begin anew to recognize in her the apostle of a gospel which is bound to be the *dharma* of Indian nationhood in the future. The time is now ripe when a life such as hers can burst forth in all its effulgence on our national consciousness, filling us with new

stimulus and energy to make India as great as she was in the past, or perhaps, greater still, for did she not say : 'Again must India bestir herself ! Again must she give rise to world-ideas and world-power. Other periods, must come, equal to, if not greater than those of Chandra Gupta, Ashoka, and Akbar.?'

## SANSKRIT HISTORICAL KAVYAS

By DR J. B. CHAUDHURI

Europeans generally accuse ancient Indian writers of lacking historical sense and acumen. Of course, it has to be admitted that, whatever be the reason, ancient Sanskrit writers have generally neglected history as a subject, and that, as compared with the other immensely rich branches of Sanskrit literature, such as philosophy, *kavya*, rhetoric and prosody, etc. there are only a few authentic historical works of Sanskrit. Still, it would be wrong to say that no records of value have been left by our ancient historians and that for getting a glimpse of our glorious past, we have to depend wholly on the accounts of visiting foreigners.

Apart from the numerous rock-edicts, copper-plates, etc. which enable us to have a direct first-hand knowledge of a large number of ancient Indian Kings, there are also some actual Sanskrit historical works, like the famous *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, which are of no less value. There are also a large number of historical *kavyas*, like the *Vikram-ankadevacharita* of Bilhana, which ingeniously combine history with poetry. Our *Puranas* also contain a large element of history. Specially during the middle ages both the Hindu and Muslim historians composed a large number of historical works in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. These works are invaluable and indispensable to us, if we want

to reconstruct an authentic history of mediaeval India. In this short article, I propose to give a brief outline of a few Sanskrit historical *kavyas* composed during the middle ages. The tendency, often found in Indians, to write history in the form of *kavyas*, to mix fact with fancy, is perhaps due to the desire to present the dry facts in a more attractive form to the readers. But still the historical value of these *kavyas* should not be minimized, for the solid facts have not been ignored, or distorted by their writers, as is evidenced by their corroboration in many cases by other proofs.

As examples, we may take the following : (1) The *Abdullahcharita* of Lakshminipati. It is doubly interesting, being the history of a Muslim King-maker written by a Hindu poet. The only manuscript of this work has recently been edited by the present writer in the *Prachyarani*, the Journal of the Institute of Oriental Learning, Calcutta, Vol. III, No. 4 and Vol. IV.

The historical incidents dealt with in the present work mostly took place between 1707 A. D., when Alamgir died, and 1721, the second year of the reign of Muhammad Shah. The historical events culminating in the murder of Hussain Ali and the removal of Abdullah from the position of minister and his

final reinstatement have been graphically described in this work. The casual references in it to Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jahan, Sikander Shah, Aurangzeb, etc. much enhance the importance of the work.

The *Abdullahcharita* was composed during the lifetime of the great Sayyid Minister Abdullah the King-maker and, therefore, the whole atmosphere as depicted in the work is surcharged with intense action. A better classical source of the history of later Mughals than the present work is not known, and the *Abdullahcharita* is bound to be acclaimed as a valuable document by all lovers of Indian history and culture throughout the succeeding ages.

(2) The *Nripatinigarbhitā Vṛtta* by Lakshmipati. This work has not as yet seen the light of the day. It also covers the same field as that of the previous work, and is only an abbreviated version of the former.

The most important feature of both the above-mentioned works is their language—a juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian words.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The *Jamavijayakavya* by Vaninatha. Only one manuscript of this work is known to exist, and this highly important work deals with the history of the royal family of Bhavnagar, the ancestors of well-known Ranji and Duleep Sinha.

The work is complete in seven cantos, of

<sup>1</sup> V. 28—Kim vai nijainakhanena mustarī pratimena tu.

V. 92—*Suvaha gosalam* kritva sarvabhaumantike svayam.

V. 104—*Tamagatam navabam* tu jnatva *tasarumantara*.

V. 481—*Auratceharakochehde faramoshah prajayete*

V. 432-433—*Jauravaradanem sarvam vusmayam chasti vai yatah,*

*Atastasya kshaye yatnah sahibim* praptumichechata.

*Kenapi na hi kartavyo janata tarvakasthitim.*  
*Hakkam trayā ma. iklam tu mantavyam na*  
*durogakam.*

Thus, hundreds of non-Sanskrit words—Arabic, Persian, and Urdu—have been used throughout the work.

which the first gives a panoramic view of the following rulers: (1) Sama, (2) Neta, (3) Mautiyara, (4) Abala, (5) Jaradina, (6) Rahu, (7) Addala, (8) Ahobala, (9) Lakshyari, (10) Laksha, (11) Unnata, (12) Shyam, (13) Kaku, (14) Rayadhana, (15) Bali, (16) Saunda, (17) Vairiha, (18) Laksha, (19) Rayadhana, (20) Garjana, (21) Halla, (22) Rayadhana, (23) Kubera, (24) Haladhara, (25) Haripala, (26) Unnata, (27) Umachi (?), (28) Haribhima, (29) Haladhara, (30) Lasa, (31) Shatrushalya.

The second canto is devoted to the description of the war that took place between Shatrushalya and the king of Surat, who was subsequently vanquished.

It is stated in the third canto that Shatrushalya's son Sri Raul was the founder of Navanagar. His son was Virabhadra, and Virabhadra's son was Shatrushalya. Vaninatha, the author, was a court-poet of this ruler, and therefore, it is natural that cantos four to seven have been devoted to the description of this ruler. In the seventh canto it has been stated that the animosity between Chandrasena and the king of Persia led to a disruption between Shatrushalya and the latter.

(4) The *Shurjanacharita* by Chandrashekhar, a Sanskrit poet of Bengal. A critical edition of this work has been prepared by the present author and will soon see the light of the day. This work deals with the life-history of the Chauhan ruler Shurjan and his predecessors. The text compares favourably in many places even with the *Raghuvamsha*, and the reader is constantly reminded of the high excellence of Sanskrit poetry as in the writings of the standard poets of bygone days. The language is simple, the style lucid, while a constant flow of thought makes the whole work a very pleasant reading. This work may be announced as one of the best poetical works Bengal has ever produced. It deserves the highest approbation of all critics.

The *Asaf-vilasa* by Jagannatha Panditara-

ja,<sup>2</sup> the *Tarachandrodaya Mahakavya*,<sup>3</sup> the *Shambhuraajacharita*<sup>4</sup> by Hari Kavi, the

<sup>2</sup> Critically edited by the present author for the first time and appended to his *Muslim Patronage to Sanskrit Learning*, Vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> By Vaidyanatha Muthila. It deals with the life of Tarachandra, son of Keshavadeva, king of Multan.

<sup>4</sup> Biography of king Sambhaji, successor of Shivaji, in 12 cantos. An excellent work.

*Ishvara-vilasa-kavya*,<sup>5</sup> etc. are works of a similar type. There are hundreds of historical *kavyas* of this type which ought to be ransacked for the reconstruction of Sanskritic studies in independent India. India has recovered from a long stupor, and it is high time to make headway in the study of this very important branch of Sanskrit literature.

<sup>5</sup> Biography of Ishvara Singh, son of Savai Jayasinha of Amber, by Krishna Kavi.

## A PILGRIMAGE TO PURI

BY A WANDERER

About twentyeight years back when I visited the temple of Jagannath, a priest who acted as my guide pressed me to offer worship to the deity. But as in the request I scented more of his personal interest than any concern for my spiritual welfare, I said, 'I have no devotion, so I cannot give any offerings. Please pray to the Lord Jagannath that I may have devotion. If I get that, the next time I visit Puri, I shall of my own accord offer worship.' The youngman, who was accustomed to exploit the credulity of hundreds of pilgrims, was surprised at my blunt and unorthodox statement. He looked askance at me and did not know what to say in reply.

Since then I have not forgotten what I said to the priest-guide. Now and then the words I said to him flash to my mind, and with that I seem to see the very face of that man—his eyes piercing, as it were, to my heart to find out if I were true. After such a long time, as I was again seized with a desire to visit Puri I asked myself, 'What did I say to the priest? Have I now genuine devotion? Why do I like to go to Puri?' To my great agony I did not find any definite answer to my questions, but still one evening I found myself at the Howrah station bound for Puri.

Some friends came to see me off at the station. Bidding farewell is always a painful affair. I imagine very few persons can overcome its effects, but in the modern age it is a sign of culture not to betray one's emotion, and so we do not always say what we feel. As the train started, with the engine throwing up curly volumes of smoke in the sky, the friends became lost in the crowd that lined on the platform. I had then nothing but my own thoughts and musings to fall back upon. When you start for a destination, the sights and surroundings of that place come uppermost in your imagination, yet the things that are immediate do not altogether pass unnoticed. In my compartment were an old man—very, very old, a silly-looking youngman, and a tall strongly-built Sikh. We were altogether four. The old man was perhaps in some Government office in his active days. Though the Britishers were now away, and he had long retired, the influence of service life was still on him. When he was asked his name, he unmistakably said, 'Rai Bahadur .....'. Several times he did that. Though he had one foot in the grave he wanted to bank upon a British title for prestige and respectability. Poor man! he was not conscious that things had now altogether changed. What once was



an indication of honour was now looked upon with pity, if not contempt. But he was too old to sense that. He was living in the past. As one witnessed such sights, one wondered what a great chaos the British rule of two hundred years had wrought in our thought and outlook !

The young fellow-passenger, I learnt, was a son of one of the richest men in our country. As one looked at his dull eyes and blank face, and at the same time imagined the amount of privilege and advantages he enjoyed, which, properly distributed, would ensure bright and useful careers for at least twenty youngmen sunk in poverty, one found the answer as to why socialism was thriving all over the world.

The stalwart Sikh gentleman, with his flowing beard tied with a handkerchief which covered almost his lips was a very obliging person. He was ever ready to help others—so much so that it was striking. If we can think and act in terms of the comforts and convenience of others even in a train journey of a few hours, we can radiate peace and happiness whose memory is not easily forgotten. There is an art of living by which life becomes enjoyable. But how many of us know that, and far less can practise it !

Towards dawn, we were nearing Cuttack. There were stretches of open field on both sides of the railway, and at a distance were visible the small hillocks of the Eastern Ghats. It was twilight. The monsoon clouds playing on the hill-tops made a charming scenery. It was a great joy to be looking at them and enjoy the beauty of nature . . . . That was all right so long as one could live in imagination and in dreams. But what about hard realities ? We were in Orissa, a very, very poor province, where the people were struggling hard for the bare necessities of life. Could one in such circumstances think of anything other than bread problems ? Why talk only of Orissa ? In India ninety percent of the population are steeped in poverty, and the barest necessities of life are denied to them.

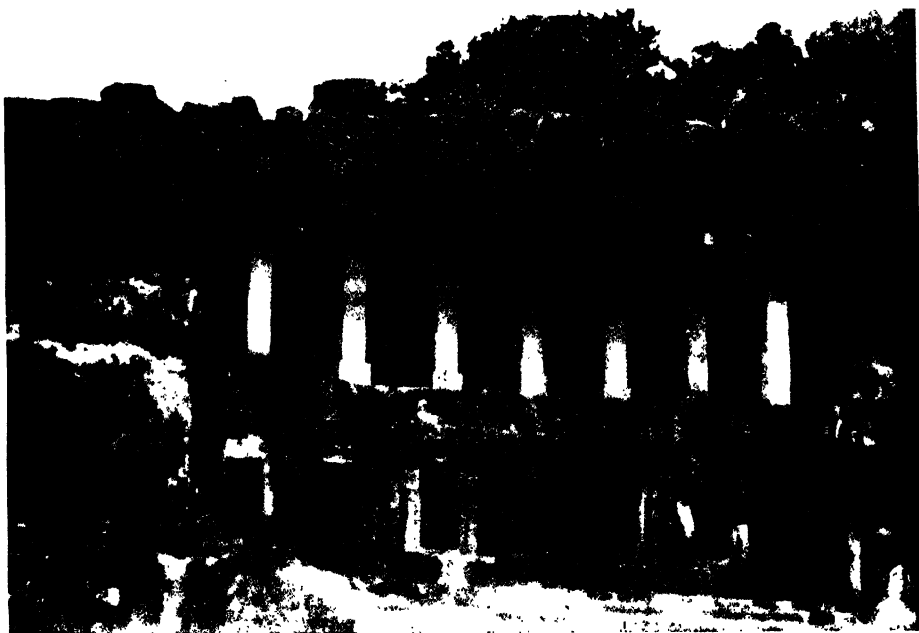
We passed by Cuttack, the present capital of Orissa. Cuttack was also the capital of the Keshari Kings in the 10th century. From the train we could see the long rivetment on the bank of the Kathjuri river built by the kings of the Keshari dynasty. This embankment is over two miles in length, and still stands as a monument of skill in masonry work in Orissa about a thousand years back. It was built to protect Cuttack against the ravages of flood.

\*

I got down at Bhubaneshwar on my way to Puri. It was early morning. In drizzling rains I entered with my luggage into a carriage which had almost completed its life. The horses also were no better. As we moved a short distance, we were pointed out the site of the contemplated new capital of the province. Bhubaneshwar was long the capital of Orissa in ancient times. It is in the fitness of things that it will again be the capital of the province. If the present plan of the Government materializes, history will literally repeat itself.

I

On reaching Bhubaneshwar I felt ill and was almost confined to bed for two days. It was a disappointment to me, but it gave me opportunities to read books on the past history of Orissa, specially with reference to Bhubaneshwar. What a gorgeous past Bhubaneshwar had ! Here in ancient times the Jaina and Buddhist kings ruled, later Bhubaneshwar became the capital of the Hindu rulers. Even now the surrounding area bears the relics of past glory. About four miles from Bhubaneshwar there are rock-cut caves—Khandagiri and Udaygiri. Some say that they were built by Kharavelo—a Jaina King. Some of the caves were built by the Buddhists and served as monasteries. About four miles from Bhubaneshwar there is a place called Dhauli, where there are rock-cut inscriptions of Ashoka dated about the middle of the third century B.C. At Bhuban-



RAJA RANI CAVES, BHUBANESHWAR

shwar there is now going on excavation work undertaken by the Orissa and the Central Government, which indicated that this place was a prosperous town between 200 B.C. and 400 A.D. After that came the Keshari dynasty of Orissa, founded by Yayati Keshari in the 5th century A.D. The Keshari and the Ganga dynasties ruled Orissa for more than a thousand years, and kept back the Muslim invasion till the year 1568, when Kalapahar attacked Orissa and broke down the Hindu supremacy. This long rule of the Hindu kings marked the glorious period of Orissa. The rulers did not spend much money on themselves. They lived religious lives and encouraged religion in others. It was due to this that Orissa was dotted with temples and great works of architecture. More important of these can be found in Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Konarak. Of them, Bhubaneswar bears the largest number of temples. Some say that in the past there was a time when Bhubaneswar

contained six thousand temples dedicated to Shiva.

Many persons interested in archaeology, ancient architecture and old history, visit Bhubaneswar; but for millions of Hindu pilgrims the chief object of attraction is the *Lingaraja* (Shiva) temple. Innumerable pilgrims from all over India come to worship at the temple of Jagannath at Puri, and most of them make it a point to see also *Lingaraja* at Bhubaneswar. It is said that Sri Chaitanya also visited this place on his way to Puri, and stopped here for a day.

## II

The Lingaraja temple is a massive structure—120 cubits in height, the premises comprising an area of 333 cubits in length and 266 cubits in breadth. It is situated near a huge tank called Bindusarovar—800 by 520 cubits in area. Pilgrims consider it holy to bathe in this tank. Usually it is after bath-

ing here that they go to the temple. Records say that Sri Chaitanya also did the same. The temple was completed in 667 A.D. by the efforts of three successive kings, beginning with Yayati Keshari.

The temple looks exquisitely beautiful with Bindusarovar as the background. Coming by the main road, as we approached the temple, we found a row of small buildings standing like a wall before us. As we proceeded, we found that the path between two buildings was like a mountain pass, and as we crossed it, the Bindusarovar was before us with the magnificent view of the temple behind it. Many pilgrims were going to the temple, many were found taking bath in the sacred tank. Right from here there was an atmosphere of devotion. But lo, what was there? While on one side of the tank

pilgrims were bathing with priests uttering sacred *mantras*, on the opposite side—at a distance—sitting on some rocklike things on the water were three or four persons, jet black in appearance, the whole body completely bare but for a loin-cloth round their waist, and a piece of white cloth tied on the head, with intense devotion looking to the front—with fishing rods in their hands. So deeply absorbed were they with their own purposes

that they were supremely oblivious of the whole surrounding. The sight seemed so funny and interesting that it could not escape notice. Oh, their concentration and devotion! Like the gurus of the *Avadhuta*, they served

as object-lessons to the pilgrims who lacked concentration and one-pointed devotion!

It was a great joy to enter the temple in company with innumerable jostling pilgrims. In such a company, even if one was wanting in faith, one got inspiration from the devotion beaming through the eyes and face of so many people. Perhaps herein lay the secret and genesis of congregational worship.

But how could one particular temple be the source of so much attraction? Was that due to its architectural beauty, its massive size, the personal influence of its owner, say the king who built it? No,

none of these can supply devotional inspiration to such a vast number of people, and that for such a long time. The real cause was much deeper. It is said that where saints live, or the places they visit, become holy. A temple becomes the source of perennial interest, if any one has got here a direct perception of Truth or feel the living presence of God. Bricks and mortar do not make a real temple, nor any external



LINGARAJA TEMPLE BHUBANESHWAR

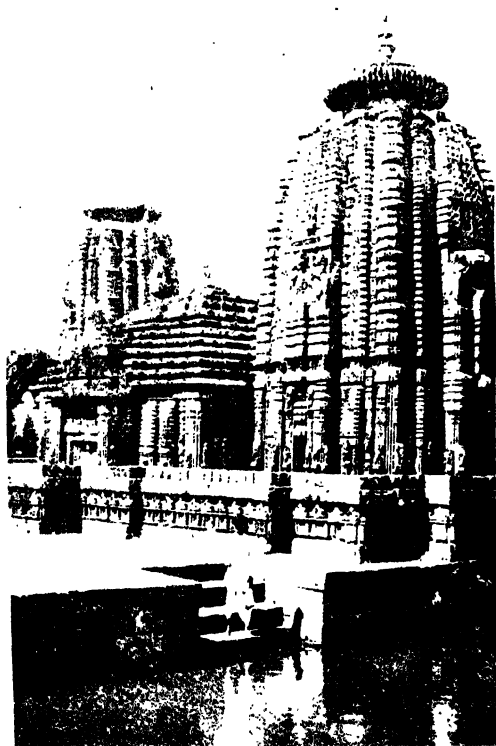
influence, but the soul of a temple is that some one, at some time, had some religious experience there. The more intense and direct that experience, the more lasting the influence. In course of time, the surroundings may have degenerated, the persons in charge of the worship may have degraded, but pilgrims ignore them. They seek to get help from the fountain-head of inspiration. From this standpoint if we look at some of our temples, we find what a great service they have been doing to the vast population for many generations! The temple of Jagannath at Puri, this temple at Bhubaneswar have built up the religious life of the whole of Orissa, and their influence has overflowed the boundaries of the province.

In my visit to the temple I was accompanied by a Vedantin, versed in the intricacies of the Advaita philosophy. While in the temple, he performed almost all the ritualistic forms of worship which an ordinary pilgrim, under the direction of priests, does. I asked him how he could reconcile his ritualistic acts with his knowledge of high Vedanta philosophy. The Vedantin replied, 'It is better to identify oneself completely with the atmosphere of the place one goes in pilgrimage to. Only by that one can reap the best advantages of a pilgrimage.' I appreciated his remarks. Yes, if you have not the proper frame of mind, your visit to a holy place becomes like the excursion of an antiquarian, or a history-student. Even in ordinary circumstances how much does a tourist lose, when he visits a country but has not the sympathetic understanding to look at and study things from the standpoint of its people!

### III

Other important things to be seen at Bhubaneswar proper were the Mukteshwar, Parashurameshwar, and Raja-Rani temples. Of these the Parashurameshwar temple is the

oldest, built in the 5th or the 6th century A.D. The Mukteshwar temple was built in the 6th or 7th century A.D. It represents the high watermark of Orissan architecture, and is appropriately called a 'dream in sandstone'. The *torana* or the gateway of this temple is extremely beautiful. It is said that this *torana* served as a model to the magnificent



MUKTESHWAR TEMPLE, BHUBANESHWAR

one at Konarak referred to by Abul Fazal, the famous historian in the court of Akbar. This temple, though not very large in size, is a thing of rare beauty, surrounded by shady trees and overhanging branches. It did not seem to attract as many pilgrims as the great *Lingaraja* temple, but situated in a calm and quiet place this gem of architecture is sure to give much spiritual inspiration to a contemplative mind.

The Raja-Rani temple is a Vaishnava temple. Strangely enough, it has no idol in it. There are surmises as to the reason for this. But the temple, situated in the midst of green fields in proud isolation, away from the spots where people offer worship, has a distinct individuality. It is a building which attracts a large number of visitors, though not necessarily pilgrims. It is of a comparatively later date—perhaps twelfth century. १८७१

After a short stay at Bhuvaneshwar, I started for Puri. The famous Car Festival of Jagannath was near. We could feel that even from Bhuvaneshwar. For there was an influx of pilgrims even here on their way to Puri. As I was going to the railway station I saw long rows of pilgrims wending their way to that place.

When I reached the station, I found the platform completely filled with pilgrims. We heard that the trains were coming packed with pilgrims—so much so that booking was stopped. I was in a fix as to what to do. Perhaps many other passengers felt that way. When the trains arrived, some passengers were allowed to get in. To my

good luck, I managed to be one of them.

At Khurda Road Junction, twentyseven miles from Puri, some additional passengers got into our compartment, which was already crowded. We were each of a different type. One was an industrialist—an England-return-

ed gentleman, with his European wife. Another was a Khaddar-clad congressman. One was an educationist. One was a devout Brahmin from a neighbouring place going perhaps on pilgrimage. Another was a Government official—he could be seen from his dress. In railway travels some persons find it convenient to discuss all manner of things. One starts the conversation, others who find the time hanging heavily on them, vort round him. And there goes on lively—sometimes heated—discussions for hours. During the war-



RAJARANI TEMPLE, BHUVANESHWAR

time the subject of conversation was invariably the strength of the Germans, or the likely invasion of India by the Japanese. After the war had been over, the usual topic would be the Hindu-Muslim riots, or the pros and cons of dividing India into Hindustan and Pakistan, and so on. Nowadays the subject of talk is usually the alleged mismanagement of Congress Govern-

ments and the corruption and blackmarketing that have been going on unchecked. Every one who joins in the discussion talks so gravely that he seems to be confident that, put in the charge of affairs, he could do much better; only his wise counsel was not sought for. It is interesting to listen to these conversations silently. In such talks nobody under the sun—however great and respected—is spared. In our compartment, too, hot discussions went on by the passengers, representing different interests. The England-returned gentleman was talking vigorously as to what could be done to develop Orissa industrially, and how the Government was doing nothing. The Government official was cautious in his words, though now and then he betrayed his knowledge of corruption in the administration. And the Khaddar-clad congress worker showed his strong resentment of the present state of affairs in the country. As one listens to such discussions—and they can be abundantly heard in railway travels throughout India—one wonders what is the reason for such widespread dissatisfactions. It may be people expect that, with the exit of the British rule, heaven will overnight come down on earth, and they are disappointed. Some forget that people have their own responsibilities, now that the country is free; but people in general are less conscious of their own duties and more keen on finding the faults of others. Or it may be persons who are in charge of administration are new in the field, and they require experiences before they can hope to tackle the difficulties with which they are confronted. Or it may be that these criticisms by people are the result of their political consciousness. Now that freedom has come, each man feels that he has got something to say, or something to contribute, with reference to the Government. As time will pass on, there will be more of political education on the one side and greater administrative experiences on the other. Then these irresponsible criticisms will tone down and the widespread discontent will disappear.

In the meantime one should be patient!

The heated discussions in the compartment gripped my attention. Unconsciously I turned my eyes, beyond the windows, to the outside, when lovely scenery with green fields, variety of trees and plants, shady bushes, appeared before me as the train ran past. How soothing is it to see beauties of nature! Thereby you forget your immediate environments, with all their complicated problems, and go beyond the gross world of senses to a higher plane of thoughts.

#### IV

Loaded with pilgrims, the train reached the Puri station in the afternoon. I got accommodation in a house which was on the front line of the sea-beach. From my very rooms I could see the roaring waves day and night. At night the breakers splashing white foams high up wore a mystic appearance. It thrilled one's heart to be looking at the blue expanse fading into the last line of the distant horizon.

I was wondering why Puri was so much the source of attraction for religious people—for persons of various sects. Here Shankaracharya came and founded a monastery—one of the four he built in the four corners of India for the revival of Hinduism. There is a monastery belonging to the Ramanuja sect. It is said that Nanak also came here, but as he was not allowed to enter the temple he went to the seashore and composed a famous song which describes how the cosmic worship is eternally going on in the universe, in which the sun and the moon and stars take part. Sri Chaitanya, by his stay of long eighteen years at Puri, sanctified this place to the utmost. But then even before his time, the temple of Jgannath was a very important place of pilgrimage. It is said that while Sri Chaitanya was coming on foot to Puri, surrounded by his retinue of disciples, as soon as the tall spire of the Jagannath temple was in sight, he fell into an ecstasy, and it was long before his mind came down to the material



SUNRISE, PURI SEA-BEACH

plane. After that how many times had he not entered into the superconscious state in these surroundings! He lived an ecstatic life—day and night—in this period of eighteen years. A spot is marked inside the temple where he would be standing in beatitude as he looked at the Deity—the Lord Jagannath. Hardly could he see the figure of the Deity with material eyes. For the very sight of the Image threw his mind into a superconscious state. Even at his residence at Puri, now called Gambhira, almost the whole of the day and far into the night he would be found absorbed in singing the praise of the Lord. The influence of such a spiritual giant was bound to last for hundreds of years to come. After that how many great souls got illumination here, who can say? But that many did get will be evident from the close study of the biography of many saints who had visited Puri.

According to the Pur. Gazetteer (1929), there are as many as seventy *maths* (monastic houses) in Puri town, belonging to various

sects—Shaiva, Vaishnava, followers of Kabir, Nanak, and others. One writer has enumerated six *maths* belonging to the school of Shankara, fifteen to the Ramanuja sect, twentysix to the disciples of Ramananda, four owned by the followers of Nimbarka. Of them some are in a moribund condition, some are very rich. In any case, all these indicate how this sacred spot has, from time immemorial, supplied India with spiritual sustenance.

According to the famous historian Hunter, the present temple of Jagannath was built out of the ruins of the previous one by Sri Ananga Bhima Deva in the year 1198—after fourteen years of work by the artificers. It is said that it cost something like forty or fifty lakhs of rupees. But the early history of the temple is lost in antiquity. Some say that it was originally a Buddhist temple, as Hindus occupied it and converted it into a Hindu place of worship. The three deities

that are now found in the temple originally represented the Buddhist Trinity—Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha. There are many mythological stories with regard to the origin of the temple. Some of them are very interesting. One of them which has captured the popular imagination is this : There lived in the city of Avanti in the state of Malwa (Central India) a king called Indradyumna. He was a deeply religious man. Once a

was through Lalita that Vidyapathi knew that Vishvasu went every night in secret to a remote forest and worshipped the god Nilmadhava. Vidyapathi thus got the information for which he had left his home. He then returned to the city of Avanti and gave the precious news about Nilmadhava to king Indradyumna, who after many adventures, arrived at and besieged the village of the Shabaras. But to his great disappointment,



JAGANNATH TEMPLE

devotee, sent by God Himself, came to the court of Indradyumna and casually, in the course of conversation, mentioned the name of the deity Nilmadhava. This aroused in the king a great desire to see Nilmadhava. He sent emissaries to all directions to find out where Nilmadhava was, but they all came back unsuccessful. The royal priest Vidyapathi, however, began to wander and wander till he came to the land of the Shabaras, a non-Aryan race so called. There he became the guest of a Shabar named Vishvasu and stayed with him for some time. Gradually he fell in love with and married Lalita, the young daughter of Vishvasu. It

the king found that Lord Nilmadhava had vanished. At this the king felt so sad that he resolved to give up his body through fast. At that moment he heard the following message from Heaven : 'You are destined not to see Nilmadhava. Go to the seashore of Puri and erect a temple there. In that you will find Nilmadhava in another form.' That is the genesis of the temple of Jagannath at Puri. Was Nilmadhava the image of Buddha secretly worshipped by the Shabara people ? That is however the subject of research by the historians. But ordinary people find enough feeling of devotion from this simple story.

For hundreds of years, the temple of



Jagannath is considered so sacred, and is looked upon with such respect and veneration that there are religious festivals here almost all the year round. The chief of all these festivals is the Car Festival, which comes off towards the end of June. Thousands of pilgrims flock to Puri to see Jagannath and his companion deities drawn in three huge chariots impressively decorated. It is said that Chaitanya Deva with his retinue would, out of overflowing devotion, dance and sing praise of the Lord before the chariots, as they would be slowly drawn by the pilgrims. The origin of the Car Festival is unknown. Some say it is Buddhist in origin—it was first started by the Buddhists who celebrated the birthday of Buddha by a Car Festival. It was copied also by the Shaivas and the Jainas. There can be found descriptions of Car Festivals even in ancient Europe. Whatever might be the origin and history of the Car Festival, it is at present a unique sight to see thousands of devotees filling the main road in front of the temple, as also the terraces of the houses on both sides, and looking devoutly to the deities as the three giant cars pass slowly by. The ancient tradition has continued. Time has not been able to lessen the enthusiasm of the devotees.

The actual management of the temple, its daily worship, and many festivals are in the hands of a large number of attendants forming into as many as thirty-six divisions. Each section is put in charge of a particular piece of work. This system has been going on for generations. But the actual administration

nowadays is so bad, that it is repellent to a modern mind. There is a talk that the Government will set up a representative committee to take charge of the management. Let us hope that things will thereby improve, and the unnecessary sufferings of the pilgrims will decrease. But the pilgrims themselves are unmindful of their immediate hardships. Any inconvenience they experience on such occasions, they consider as inevitable: their mind is too full of devotion.

There was a great rush of pilgrims, every time we went to the temple. It was but expected. Somehow we managed once to enter the temple and see the worship from a very close proximity. On the day of the Car Festival we remained for a long time inside the temple and near the shrine, witnessing the acts of devotion of innumerable souls, hungry for increasing faith. Has this intense hankering of theirs no value! Let us hope and pray that they will bear fruit.

I left Puri on the evening of the day of Car Festival, for fear that there would be difficulty of accommodation in the railway compartment. As the train moved and left Puri, I asked myself, 'What have I gained?' I did not know if I had gained anything which was tangible, but the panorama of a long line of devotees and saints who had visited Puri for hundreds of years and got spiritual uplift rushed to my mind's eyes, and I was overwhelmed.

August, 1948.

"First obtain Bhakti and all other things shall be added unto you. First Bhakti, then work. Work, apart from Bhakti, is helpless and cannot stand."

-SRI RAMAKRISHNA

# PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS: A VEDANTIC APPROACH

BY PRABAS JIBAN CHAUDHURY

Substance has proved to be a will o' the wisp. Physics has grown self-aware now and has abandoned its quest after the 'core of things,' declaring it to be a non-existent nonsense. This 'core', moreover, serves no useful purpose for physics: the entities such as atoms, electrons, or waves, if regarded as real things, cannot *explain* the perceptible phenomena; they cannot be the adequate *cause* of their so-called 'observable effects.' This is seen from such terms as 'emergence' and 'new substantial relatedness', which some naturalists use to describe their supposed production of a qualitative effect out of a conjunction of some basic elements. Then, there is always the question, what causes the basic stuff itself?—a question that must accompany a 'first cause.' So that, substance raises more problems than it can solve. The physicists have given up their past allegiance not only to substance but also to the notion of a productive cause implied in the above statements. For this notion involves an unsolved paradox. If the productive cause is inadequate to produce the effect which contains some new character (due to conjunction, or 'substantial relatedness'), it is no true cause; and if it is adequate to produce the effect, the latter is identical with the cause and no real relation of causality can bind them. The relinquishment of the ideas of substance and productive cause implies a drastic change in the meaning of explanation, and modern physics has recognized this change. Explanation of a particular phenomenon or law now consists in connecting it with some general quantitative law and showing the former to be a particular case of the latter. In short, explanation consists in description; due regard is now paid to Bacon's caution that science should not attempt to answer 'why' and 'what' of things, but should be content with dealing with the question, 'how things behave?'

Such is the present attitude of physics, the vanguard of scientific thought. The metaphysician is generally abashed as if he has been found out. The positivists speak of his part in physics during the last three centuries as one of a muddle-headed old fellow misleading physics while always meddling with it. The metaphysician in Galileo, Newton, Laplace, Faraday, and others led them to seek a unifying *being* (not logical but the 'thing' itself) behind their formal unification, and, so, set scientific research on an endless track that led researchers from one mechanical model to another, all placed in the order of increasing subtlety, dignity, and 'truth'. It was Mach who first asked scientists to stay on empirical grounds and to treat all facts as equivalent. But the physicist could be weaned of his metaphysical bias for substance or the 'first cause' only very recently. He has now completely broken the three hundred years long partnership with the metaphysician, who has grumblingly left the laboratory for his quiet nook in the library.

Our object in this paper is to see whether it is the metaphysician who is to blame in this joint enterprise known as classical science (or scientific rationalism), or it is the physicist. The general suspicion falls on the former. The result of our investigation will be that in one respect none is to blame, while in another, both are to blame. None, because they naively played their respective parts with considerable zeal; both, because they should have known that the object and method of one's research are essentially different from, and even logically incompatible with, those of the other. Generally these two persons lived in a single physical frame. Evidently, we are assuming here a concept of metaphysics as well as one of science (physics in particular). and our investigation of the case, metaphysics *versus* physics, will mainly consist of an

exposition of these concepts and of their asserted incompatibility. The judgment will follow simply from these concepts.

The scientific object (fact) has its objectivity *given*; the *otherness* of facts is a felt something which is itself not a fact, and science believes all facts as knowable. Thus the implicit creed of science is realism, which ensures objectivity of facts, *plus* a solipsistic idealism, which ensures the knowability of all facts. Science does not worry about its epistemological presuppositions, and, so, of the contradictions in them. The scientific object is not one single thing involving many as its organic parts, that is only what some scientists wish it to be. It is, rather, a multiplicity of facts, loosely connected with many a missing link. A fact is understood with reference to another, which has to be related to similar facts, and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus, empirical thought, proceeding as it does by proper logical judgments, connects a fact with another and is never complete. Because some facts resemble one another and also repeat with tolerable constancy under similar circumstances, empirical thought has been able to economize mental labour and to arrive at some general laws of connection of facts. The functional relations so arrived at are, however, only rough generalizations or working rules which cannot be valid laws for anticipating future facts. They depend for their absolute validity on such principles as uniformity of nature and causality, which are not proven but merely assumed by science to organize its data. So that, science, i.e. empirical thought, can have no rest and can establish itself on no firm basis; its object is the shifty surface of things known as phenomena, and its method consists of observation, classification, experimentation, and careful relating of a fact with another.

Metaphysical thought arises not out of an urge for higher unification of facts, not out of any such scientific mode of research. It arises out of the Self's projection of its inner experiences. The Self in its enjoying attitude

is subjective, but while it contemplates its reality, unity, knowledge, and spontaneity, it believes in an objective entity that is an infinite singular, self-subsistent, and self-evidently unfolding itself through a multiplicity of forms—matter, life, mind, and their multifarious manifestation. This self-subsistent object is neither known as a fact is known through external perception, nor as the self is known through intuition. Rather, it is a believed content, a symbolic representation of the Self's subjective experiences as a subject of knowledge, will, and beatitude. (Feelings other than beatitude are external psycho-somatic facts and belong to the empirical self, the Self knows them through introspection as objects, though it temporarily suffers them as if they are its own states). Thus Self-intuition, as that of the mystics, reveals the reality of the Self as a permanent subject, (a spirit that is never known as an object); contemplation of the Self with consequent self-projection or symbolization produces the self-subsistent metaphysical object; ordinary introspection distinguishes the phenomenal self from the Self (noumenal), and ordinary perception reveals the scientific object (fact). Empirical thought is employed in the last two kinds of knowledge (which are knowledge proper), while philosophical thought is required to elaborate the first two kinds of knowledge. (Philosophical thought is no thought proper, nor the two kinds of knowledge just referred to knowledge proper, yet these have their rightful place in man's mental and spiritual culture which, in its endeavours to comprehend reality as a whole, is never satisfied with the meagre and inconclusive yield of 'proper' knowledge from empirical thought). The question of reality of the metaphysical object is a natural one. The Self, when fully realized as a pure spirit and distinguished from the empirical self, appears as reality itself, for to deny its reality involves a self-contradiction. The metaphysical object, therefore, being but the symbolic representation of the Self drawn by the Self in its

objective attitude has also a kind of reality which the Self can deny only when it ceases to symbolize itself and contents itself with the subjective (enjoying) attitude. Or else, the Self may assume an absolute attitude in which the object is appropriated by it (the Self) and its (the object's) separate being denied, the subject and the object (the latter is but the subject symbolized) are synthezized on a higher plane of self-realization. For the Absolute, therefore, there is neither enjoying of reality, nor any contemplation of it by way of symbolization. The Absolute is, thus, above reality-unreality, subject-object and all such categories. Nothing positive can be asserted of it as every such concept delimits it and so falsifies it. The Absolute can be spoken of only in negatives as is done in Vedanta (in terms *neti, neti*, meaning 'not this, not that!').

However, our concern in this study is with the metaphysical object. We find from this rough sketch of a transcendental psychology that the reality of the metaphysical object is similar to that of an illusory one (e.g. one seen in a hallucination) which the self (here empirical) projects outwards. The object thus projected represents some state of the empirical self, some affection, or tendency. The illusory object is real in a sense, yet unreal in another sense. For the illusion breaks and the illusory object is no longer believed in, but that it was cannot be denied. In the case of the Self (noumenal) the illusory object projected is no image but a symbol which has nothing in common with an image but its objectivity. The illusory object is *maya*, and this is the metaphysical object. It is yet is not. For the Self is eternal and it projects itself in its objective attitude; again, the Self may not project itself and be totally unaware of the metaphysical object. Moreover, the projection outwards and the withdrawal into itself are not temporal activities (for the Self is above time), so that, speaking in ordinary terms, we may say that the metaphysical object (*maya*) eternally is

and never is. Such is the contradictory nature of *maya*. From an empirical standpoint it is ununderstandable and ineffable. From the standpoint of the Self, realized (i.e. enjoyed) as the pure subject, it is a non-entity, but from the standpoint of the Self, contemplating itself in an objective attitude, it is an entity as real as a symbol is real with respect to a reality symbolized. And lastly, from the standpoint of the Absolute, the metaphysical object is again a non-entity. There is a difference, however, in the two cases of the metaphysical object being a non-entity. When the Self in its subjective attitude is innocent of it, the latter has a potential being, for the Self by its very nature takes up an objective attitude, the subjective attitude implies the objective one by contrast. The two attitudes of the Self are logical alternates which the Self transcends only in its absolute mode of being. Then *maya* ceases to have even a potential being.

For empirical (i.e. scientific) thought, thus, the metaphysical object is a nonsense, and the positivists have done the right thing in eliminating it from scientific vocabulary. The metaphysician in the classical physicists did not see that the metaphysical object, substance, was never to be arrived at by inference from the manifold of facts. For a true inference will yield but another fact; an atom, an electron, or a wave is either such a fact (waiting to be perceived as the realists believe), or a fiction. The fact is never self-subsistent and, so, cannot be the metaphysical object. And the fictions which empirical thought spins out for economical description of facts, (the methodological concepts, hypothetical models) have not the same kind of reality as is possessed by the symbolic Self-representation on a different plane made by the Self. So that, the metaphysical object cannot be proved by either an inductive or a deductive method, in each of which the ultimate sources of (and also courts of appeal for) knowledge are facts. Philosophical reasoning, if unadulterated with empirical

thought, is no reasoning at all, but a systematic exposition of concepts self-evidently intelligible with reference to the spiritual experiences of the Self. The deductive proof in a metaphysical theory is only a make-belief, an exposition of an implicit tautology. The metaphysical concepts of substance and causality are not the same as the postulates of some basic stuff and of some functional relation between facts which science requires in order to systematize its results. The former are really derived from consciousness by Self-objectification, while the latter are formal axioms which are formulated from time to time. The Euclidean axioms are no longer valid for the physical space as inferred from present data, and the postulate of a continuum as the prime stuff is disproved by quantum theory. In fact, there are many possible sets of axioms for covering the same set of data, and the latter too are neither fixed nor can be anticipated. To regard the four-dimensional world-picture of relativity physics as the real world (the metaphysical object), or, again, to regard Schroedinger waves as Substance, is but an instance of confusion of science with metaphysics. On the other hand, to treat matter, life, and mind as scientific objects is an instance of confusion of metaphysics with science. The non-discrimination of science from metaphysics, that is, empirical thought from rational or intuitive (that deals with a content that is self-evident and symbolic of the Self) is the root cause of the great mess of both metaphysics and physics which the classical scientists made in the last three centuries. These men were great geniuses and would have made better progress both in metaphysics and physics had they *known* better, that is, had they been more conscious of what they were seeking. Classical physics, with plenty of energy and creative force, and plenty of new-found data too, did not *know* much. Modern physics knows better; it has learnt to think clearly about what it can hope to know in science and about the scientific method. In

other words, it is now able to distinguish the scientific object from the metaphysical one, and the scientific method of research (inductive-deductive) from the metaphysical (intuitive).

But the modern physicists, in their positivistic zeal, deny metaphysics all value and significance. This is but a reaction against the mischief which the metaphysical bias did to the progress of physics. A cooler understanding of the issues involved will, however, lead them to appreciate the part played by metaphysics in human knowledge in general which includes, besides scientific knowledge (proper), such kinds as may be intuitive. For it is dogmatic to maintain that sense-perception is the only valid source of knowledge. Scientific knowledge, moreover, is by its very nature not complete in itself, the scientific object being not self-subsistent, and we require some other kind of knowledge to supplement it. This is philosophical knowledge with its three grades: the philosophy of the spirit, the philosophy of the object (metaphysics), and the philosophy of the Absolute. Evidently, this philosophical knowledge is intuitive and lacks that kind of objectivity or communicability which characterizes scientific knowledge. But it is not to be suspected as idle speculation, for though there is no knowledge (proper) of the Self, or of anything relating to it, yet there is felt a demand in us to realize or intuit the Self. Thus there is a place for spiritual culture (*yoga*) leading to Self-realization spoken of by the mystics. Kant abolished knowledge to make room for faith; the greatest philosophers and mystics have done the same thing. This faith is not mere wishful thinking of the empirical self (that which is ruled by affections that are objects for the Self to contemplate and rule at will), but a direct intuition of the Self demanding Self-consciousness or Self-comprehension. To deny this is to shut a door of knowledge and deny oneself the privilege of a direct communication with multifaced reality. The metaphysical depth

of things is not to be confused with scientific facts, yet it has to be accepted as something real (on a different grade of reality) which is needed to have a complete comprehension of things. How the fact and the metaphysical object are related is a question which is born of a confusion of the two grades of reality, which is the same thing as a confusion of the two attitudes of the Self, one receptive outwards (empirical) and another intuitive and symbolizing (transcendental). To attempt to relate the two grades is to ignore the gulf between them; the idea of reality as one systematic whole where every part is organically linked with every other is but a poetic idea imagined after the image of an organism. So, the belief that the empirical world can be explained from a so-called 'higher' plane of reality is unfounded. Any such philosophical thought which proceeds from an observation of the empirical world through inference or analogy (and not from an intuition of the Self and

contemplation of it) produces but imaginative pictures of reality which are not really believed in. They have at best 'a suggestive value for science and an illustrative value for philosophy'.<sup>1</sup>

To conclude, metaphysics is to be avoided in science but allowed in knowledge in general, though no continuity between the two grades of knowledge can be asserted and no grading in terms of 'higher' and 'lower' is tenable.

<sup>1</sup> See K. C. Bhattacharyya: 'Concept of Philosophy' in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*. Edited by Profs. Muirhead and Radhakrishnan (Allen & Unwin, 1936). In the present study I have freely used Prof. Bhattacharyya's concept of philosophy as offered in that essay though I have given my own approach to the concept and have introduced some important changes in the detail. This concept of philosophy is essentially vedantic. Thus Vedanta contains the germ of the solution of the problem of substance, which (problem) is at once important and intriguing in modern scientific philosophy.

## THE SADHANA OF MIRA BAI: GLEANINGS FROM HER SONGS

By Mrs C. K. HANDOO

'I have watered the creeper of love with my tears ... Mira Bai.

Mira Bai is a much loved poetess, singer, and saint of medieval India. Though the main features of her life are too well known to bear repetition, the details of her spiritual struggle are not available to us. There is a tendency of the human mind to extol the great and make them appear as perfect beings from the very beginning of their career. Accordingly we often see that the disciples of saints and prophets either deliberately suppress, or carelessly forget to hand over to posterity that most important and interesting period of their lives when they are still striving for the desired end. To us, as to the vast majority of mankind who are less ardent than

them, the distance that is thus created is the cause of much despair; for though our eyes look up to the skies our feet are set in clay and we anxiously seek for some common bond of humanity to unite us with the ennobling lives of the great. To know that they also suffered from human weaknesses makes them infinitely dear to us, and we rejoice in thinking that if we but faithfully trudge on the chosen path, in some far off future life we also may attain to those heights that seem to be an impossible dream at the present moment, but are nevertheless the guiding light of our own prosaic and mundane lives.

However pronounced a talent one may have in a certain direction, no one is born an artist, a craftsman, or a scholar, and it is good

to remember that all knowledge or skill is gained by sheer perseverance and hard work. If this is true in the ordinary walks of life, how true it must be of life in the spiritual path. It is said in the scriptures that the act of creation has to be prefaced by the austerities of the Creator, and even the Incarnations of God have to struggle considerably before they become fully conscious of their Divine nature and mission. It is sufficient to say that greatness acquired in any sphere of life is largely due to self-effort. We would like very much to know what was the effort that Mira Bai put into her life and how she fought against the overwhelming odds that faced her. Did her steps ever falter and did she despair of reaching the end? Not mere idle curiosity impels us to lift the veil of four centuries and peer into a heart while it was still weighed by the frailties of the flesh, torn with different loyalties, and wounded by the insults of an ununderstanding husband and the intrigues of the proverbially jealous sister-in-law.

Unfortunately most of our questions will have to remain unanswered, for the very early songs are either lost or not recorded, and the psychological struggle of her life was overlooked or ignored by those who first wrote her biography; still common sense may help us to reconstruct to a certain extent a picture which, had it been preserved, would have been of great value to all spiritual aspirants. From her own words such as the following:

‘I have made friends with Giridhar since childhood.

The bond has grown too strong to be broken,’

and also from stories current about her we can safely conclude that her deep devotion to God was visible even in early childhood. Later it seems that she became conscious of a continuity of purpose that had been guiding her from life to life as she constantly brings into her songs the well-known line ‘Mira is thy servant since many lives. It is often said that Mira was an incarnation of one of the *gopis*. But while recognizing the similarity in the

purity and intensity of her devotion to the blessed milkmaids of Brindaban, we do not think that such an assumption, in any way, adds to the greatness of Mira. Though the *gopis* set up a great ideal—and far be it for us to detract from it—it is not as if they were the chosen ones for all time to come for the expression of *madhurya-bhakti*. Infinite are the avenues of approach to the Divine, and infinite is the store-house of the universe which contains in its womb innumerable perfected lives in latent form. It is, therefore, but natural that great saints should appear from time to time to shed light on the path of humanity and inspire earnest seekers of God. It is more in keeping with common sense to believe that the suffering of Mira was as real as ours would be, if we were placed in the same circumstances, and her greatest claim to our love and homage lies in the fact that she went on her path undaunted in the face of all opposition and calumny.

Scholars are of the opinion that Mira might have been influenced by the followers of Nimbarka Swami and the life of Chaitanya Deva. The former was a South Indian who lived in the twelfth century and preached the Radha-Krishna cult from Brindaban. Mira was an immediate successor of Chaitanya Deva in time, and we can easily imagine how greatly attracted her pure and devoted heart must have been to this living apostle of the Divine love of Radha and Krishna. In one song at least she makes a loving reference to Him when she says:

‘He whose feet were bound by mother  
Yasoda for stealing butter,

That boy of dark hue became Gopa  
whose name is Chaitanya.

In the garb of a *sannyasi* he depicted the  
emotions of the yellow-clad One,

Mira is the servant of Gaur Krishna, and  
Krishna’s name dwells on her lips.’

In her *Notes on Some Wanderings With Swami Vivekananda* Sister Nivedita has recorded that in comparing the two Swamiji held that while Chaitanya preached love for

the name of God and mercy to all, Mira, in contrast taught submission, prayerfulness, and service to all. The whole of Mira's life is an expression of her touching and deep self-surrender to the feet of God. She also says in one of her songs :

'I dress as he dresses me, I eat what He gives,

I sit when He commands, and I would sell myself if He wished.

My love for Him is of longstanding, I cannot live for a moment without Him.'

It is evident from Mira's songs that she eagerly sought the company of *sadhus* and was in her turn greatly influenced by them. To cultivate the friendship of holy men and serve them in love and humility is a recognized way of progressing in the spiritual path. As man is essentially spirit and not matter, so knowingly or unknowingly his innermost nature responds deeply to the uplifting influence exerted by the seekers of God. That an advanced soul like Mira should be devoted to *sadhus* is therefore nothing to be surprised at. Much of the anger that her behaviour aroused amongst her in-laws was due to her mixing freely with the *sadhus* and admitting them to the royal temple, where she sang and danced in divine ecstasy. The following conversation with her sister-in-law is typical of the attitude of both parties. Udabai :

The Rana is angry with you,  
do not seek the company of *sadhus*.

People are defaming you,  
and the family name is being abused.

You roam from forest to forest with *sadhus*,  
and have also lost your *sari*.

You are born in a royal family but dance to  
the clapping of hands.

Amongst Hindus your husband shines like  
the sun, but your mind like stagnant  
water is covered with scum.

Give up the company of Giridhar and the  
*sadhus*, and come home with me.

Mira :

The *sadhus* are my parents, family, friends,  
and dear ones, good and wise,

I always say, that day and night I seek  
refuge at their feet,

Please tell Rana I cannot agree to his  
proposal

Giridhar is the Lord of Mira, and she has  
sold herself into the hands of the *sadhus*.

There are two *sadhus* to whom she openly  
owes her indebtedness :—one is her *guru*  
Raidas and the other is the great saint  
Tulsidas, who befriended her in time of great  
perplexity and trial. Though Mira's surrender  
to God was direct and her relationship with  
Him intimate, yet she recognizes the greatness  
of the *guru*, and pays homage to him in the  
following words :—

'I have surrendered myself at the feet of  
the *guru*,

I am attracted to nothing but his feet and  
the world is but a dream.

The ocean of birth and death has dried up  
for me,

I have no anxiety to cross it, Mira's Lord  
is Giridhar Nagar and my eyes have  
turned inwards.'

In other songs she mentions the name of  
Raidas, such as 'I met my *sadguru*, the Saint  
Raidas',—which leaves no doubt that he was  
in fact her acknowledged *guru*.

Her letter to Tulsidas is of special significance. It is the only record of a conflict in her mind, when she seems to waver on her path and admit of the intense suffering she was undergoing due to the unkind treatment of her family. The provocation must have been great to have induced her to write such a letter seeking for guidance and help. The letter is as follows :

Sri Tulsī, Abode of happiness, Destroyer  
of sorrow,

I bow to you again and again ; please  
destroy the accumulated affliction of  
my life,

All the members of my family are creating  
trouble,

I suffer greatly because of my worship and  
association with *sadhus*,



.... You are like father and mother to me,  
you bestow happiness to lovers of God,  
What is the right path for me, please  
write and explain.'

Understanding her mental anguish Tulsidas promptly sent the following reply :-

'Those who do not love Sita and Ram,  
Give them up like you would a million  
enemies, though they are your dear ones.

Prahlad gave up his father, Vibhishana his  
brother, and Bharat his mother,

Bali gave up his *guru*, the *gopis* their hus-  
bands, but all of it resulted in joy,

Love and serve those only who accept  
relationship to Ram,

What use of collyrium if it destroys the  
eyes, what more shall I say,

Tulsi says, those only are worthy of respect,  
and are dearer than life,

Who are devoted to the feet of Ram : This  
is my advice to you.'

Thus it may be that this letter helped to re-  
solve her doubts and give her courage and  
strength to go on in her difficult path in spite  
of opposition.

If we are to study the external environ-  
ment of Mira the first thing that strikes us is  
the complete blindness of the members of her  
family to her great spiritual genius. It is  
often disputed that the Rana to whom she  
makes a constant reference in her songs is not  
her husband (who, it is alleged, died early),  
but is her brother-in-law. But we find there  
is nothing in her songs either in support of  
her widowhood, or of the Rana being her  
husband's brother. This is a theory which  
is hard to believe in the face of lines such as  
the following :

"I will go neither to father's house, nor  
father-in-law's, nor to my husband,

Mira has found Govind and for *guru* she  
has found Raidas".

We cannot, therefore, help concluding that  
the Rana who provided the background to her  
colourful life was none else than Bhojraj, her  
husband. He plays such an important  
part in the development of her character

that he deserves more than passing  
attention. He was a typical man of  
the world, deeply conscious of his position  
and with little or no finer feelings of  
the human heart. He was neither vicious nor  
deliberately unkind, and any other problem of  
life he would have solved according to the  
tradition of the Rajput race, but here was a  
situation which his rigid conventionalism and  
narrow heart could not cope with. Why did  
not Mira, his queen, dress herself in gay  
clothes and spend her time in joy and merriment  
with the ladies of the court? His  
coffers were full of treasures he could shower  
at her feet; but the jewellery that Mughal  
princesses would envy remained untouched.  
The remark that she was 'the queen who would  
not be queen but would wander the world with  
the lovers of Krishna' (Swami Vivekananda)  
has been very aptly said of her. She was  
obedient and loyal to her husband, but in her  
uncomfortable presence the enjoyments of  
life turned cold. Unfortunately he did not  
heed the call of a greater destiny following  
which he could have been a helpmate and  
companion to her and thus would have made  
her life smooth and his own life blessed. Mira  
never scorned him, but her very meekness and  
docility exasperated him. Soon his patience  
wore off, and he who would have been a  
devoted husband to a woman of a less fine  
calibre turned harsh and bitter. She tore at  
the very roots of his heart; she eluded him  
though he possessed her, and her desire to  
obey his slightest command and fulfil his  
whims to the letter baffled and annoyed him  
beyond measure. Then only he resolved to  
break her indomitable spirit by means so un-  
worthy and questionable that he excites in us  
nothing but a supreme contempt for the  
utter stupidity and meanness of his small and  
selfish mind. The best comment we can pass  
on him is in the words of Somerset Maugham,  
when he says : 'In the ordinary affairs of life  
stupidity is much more tiresome than wicked-  
ness. You can mend the vicious, but what in  
Heaven's name are you to do with the foolish?'

And it is only when we think of the repentance that filled his heart in later life that we are inclined to excuse the blindness that was ultimately the cause of his own sorrow. If we but believe in the maxim of the *Gita* that

'There lives a master in the hearts of men,  
maketh their deeds, by subtle pulling strings,  
dance to what tune He will,'

we shall be obliged to admit that, had it not been for the ordeal that the Rana provided, Mira's devotion would have remained untested, and to those of us whose minds are dulled by worldliness the radiant purity of her life might not have been discernible; so let us not weigh his sins in grudging scales knowing him to be a mere pawn in the Divine *lila*, and a fellow-sufferer in the same spiritual darkness as ourselves.

No character sketch of Mira can be complete without enumerating the horrible way in which the Rana tried to get rid of her by putting an end to her life by foul and unfair means. Wherever the name of Mira is known these stories are repeated endlessly and yet no one tires of them. They are the wealth of the common man to whom they stand for the ultimate triumph of the forces of good over evil, and of spirit over matter. Briefly they may be told in the words of Mira :

'Rana sent a serpent in a basket,  
it was delivered into the hands of Mira.  
When she examined it after her bath

She found an image of the Lord.

The Rana sent a cup of poison,

It turned into nectar ;

When she drank it after her bath

She became immortal.

Ranaji sent a bed of nails for Mira to sleep,

At night when Mira went to bed, she slept  
as if on flowers.

The Lord is even the helpmate of Mira

He removes her obstacles.

Mira moves about absorbed in an ecstasy of  
love for Giridhar.'

Three distinct periods in the *sadhana* of Mira Bai seem to be reflected in her songs. The first is that of a calm and steady devotion

which may be likened to a smoothly flowing river. These are the songs that are least known at the present day. A typical song of this period is as follows :

'Make Mira thy true servant O Lord,

Free me from the false duties of the world,  
My house of discrimination is being robbed,  
Though I resist with all my intelligence and  
strength,

Alas ! alas ! I am helpless.

Run O Lord, I die without succour,

Daily I listen to the teachings of religion,  
I fear the vagaries of the mind.

I serve the *sadhus* faithfully.

I set my mind to remembrance and contemplation,

Show thy maid servant the path of Devotion,  
Make Mira thy true servant O Lord.'

In this song we find that the element of self-effort and struggle is emphasized, and her mode of life is laid down in simple language. Another song which may be classed in the same category, but seems to come later, is as follows :

'Listen to my prayer O Lord, I take shelter  
in Thee

Thou hast purified many sinners and freed  
them from the bondage of the world ;  
I do not know the names of all, but only a few  
are known to me,

Ambarish and Sudama You took to Your  
abode,

Dhruva a child of five saw Your vision of  
deep blue ;

You ripened the fields of Dhana, grazed the  
cattle of Kabira,

You ate the fruit that Shabari had defiled,  
Your actions please the mind.

You accepted the barbers Sadana and Sena  
You ate Karma's *khichri* and freed the woman  
of ill fame.

Mira has coloured herself in your hue, and the  
world is well aware of this.'

Here there is a greater awareness of the grace of God and the main idea is of surrender to Him, which comes only after struggle and effort.

Just as the current of the river, as it nears the ocean, becomes swift and deep, so we find that slowly the quiet prayer and silent meditation of Mira gained in momentum, and calm devotion gave way to the pain of *viraha*, when the absence of the beloved can no longer be suffered with equanimity. There is an arresting sweetness in the songs of this period, and they are also the best known and are most widely sung by our own generation. The yearning is so intense that it pierces the armour of all mundane interest and occupation, and for a moment even the hardest of hearts trembles in sympathy as it listens to these songs :

'O Lord of my house, come home to me,  
Cool the fire of my feverishly restless body,  
I spend the whole night in weeping,  
I have lost appetite and sleep but the wicked  
breath of life goes on,  
Make the sorrowing one happy by blessing her  
with Thy vision ;  
Do not delay any longer for Mira is suffering  
the pangs of thy separation.'

Among the poet-saints of medieval India no one has depicted the feeling of *viraha* of *madhurya-bhakti* like Mira. Surdas has developed a variety and abundance of emotions, but in poignancy and depth of feeling Mira's poetry is unsurpassed. In the abandonment of love she sings :

'O Friend, my sleep is destroyed  
I spend the night waiting for my Beloved,  
My mind is set on meeting Him so I am  
restless,  
Each limb of mine is aching and my lips can  
only utter Piya ! Piya !  
No one knows the pain of my heart stricken  
with the anguish of separation,  
As the *chatak* pines for the rain cloud and  
the fish for water,  
So Mira has lost outer consciousness in deep  
yearning for Thee.'

In unendurable agony she cries out :

'I wander about wounded, no one knows the  
pain of my heart.

. . . My life is lost through sorrow, my eyes  
are lost through tears.

If I had known that there was so much  
suffering in love,

I would have sent a crier round the town  
saying that no one should love.'

In our present age Sri Ramakrishna has said again and again, 'Cry to the Lord with an intense yearning and you will certainly see Him.' Again he says, 'Longing is like the rosy dawn. After the dawn out comes the sun. Longing is followed by the vision of God.' Accordingly Mira's irresistible cry could not be denied for long and her unendurable suffering at last changed into the joys of God-vision. Thus we come to the fulfilment and end of her *sadhana*. In the gladness of her heart she sings :

'Mira dances with anklets on her feet.  
People say Mira is mad, the mother-in-law  
says she has destroyed the family.  
But Mira has found the eternal with ease,  
and Giridhar Nagar is her Lord.'

As we of lowly understanding cannot properly appreciate the intense sorrow of Mira in the seeking of God, so in great awe and wonder we look upon her joy in the finding of Him. In her songs we now hear the happy murmuring of a river which, after carving its way through hard rock and flowing through dry and parched land, finds itself in the embrace of the infinite and fathomless ocean.

We hear her singing joyously :

'My friends are drunk with wine  
but I am drunk without it.

I have drunk from the pot of love and  
wander night and day in my intoxication.

I have lighted the lamp of remembrance and  
renunciation,

My mind is the wick,

The oil has been drawn from the machine of  
the Inexhaustible One,

And the lamp burns day and night.'

We would fain follow her into that realm of the pure spirit which is as deep as the ocean and as infinite as the sky and having reached which most people are struck dumb. But

our earth-bound feet prevent us from doing so, and we are constrained to stand outside this enchanted circle, straining our ears to catch some echo of the ineffable sweetness that now flows through the blessed life of Mira. Before we close we cannot help but hear her sing once again :

'I have coloured myself in the hue of Shyam,  
Decking myself and with bells on my feet,  
indifferent to the opinion of the world,  
I dance,

In the company of *sadhus* ; gone is my  
ignorance, and I am truly transformed  
in the form of the devoted,

Singing the glories of God day and night,  
the serpent of Time cannot harm me.

Without Him the world is tasteless and all  
else is fleeting.

And Mira has developed sweet devotion to  
Giridhar Lal.'

Before the last echo of her song dies out we swiftly move across the centuries hoping to catch a glimpse of this vision of heavenly joy, and we are struck by the utter self-effacement of her song and dance as well as the joyful radiance of her personality. With heavy hearts we at last turn back reluctantly, but the tinkling of her anklet bells and her sweet voice linger strangely in our memory. And finding now that she is in a world where our intellectual criticism and comment is of no avail, we end in proper orthodox fashion by laying our hearts and those of our readers in loving homage at the magic of her dancing feet.

## BRITAIN'S ACHIEVEMENT IN INDIA : AN ESTIMATE

By DR NANDALAL CHATTERJI

India has achieved her independence after about two centuries of British domination, and now that we have celebrated the first anniversary of the advent of freedom, it is only proper that we should try to analyze and assess on an occasion like this the legacy that foreign rule has left behind it. The task is by no means easy, for British rule in India was not merely a chronological incident or episode, but was also one of the determining factors in India's long and chequered history. It is this complex character of British rule which has given rise to conflicting views about its character and legacy.

While some have viewed the English conquest of India as a grand illustration of large-scale piracy and brigandage which uprooted the foundations of Indian society and devitalized her culture, there are others who look upon British rule as an event of divine dispensation which, according to them,

has operated as a dynamic force in our life. There are still others who think that British rule is just a casual or isolated episode in the vast panorama of Indian history, which started as an accident and ended likewise, leaving only transitory marks on contemporary life with no lasting impress on India's inner soul. Again, those who base their judgment on Marxian principles would be inclined to regard the British conquest as a process which was both inevitable and beneficial. Marx himself wrote in his letters on India that 'England has been the unconscious tool of history' in fulfilling a double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old society and the laying of the material foundation of Western society in Asia. 'The native army, organized and trained by the British drill sergeant,' according to Marx, 'was the *sine qua non* of Indian self-emancipation, and of India ceasing to be

the prey of the first foreign invader.'

That each one of the interpretations cited above is only partial or one-sided would be apparent to any one who takes a synthetic view of history. Nobody will deny that British rule was essentially no better than military occupation, but the fact remains that for a considerable period it secured the willing and even spontaneous loyalty of the common people. It also materially conditioned our life in all spheres. But, to treat it as something of a divine dispensation would be meaningless. It would be equally futile to argue that it is just a casual and unconnected event or episode, for a view like this is based on an imperfect grasp of the fundamentals of history or it is just political propaganda. The Marxian analysis, highly plausible though it is, is again historically disproportionate and unconvincing, and it fails also to establish the supposed interdependence of Britain's so-called double mission and 'the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization.'

The history of British rule in India is a good illustration of the technique and character of modern imperialism and mercantile colonialism. The British conquest was not a difficult affair, but the conquerors hardly started with any pre-conceived plans. Success was gradual, and it was more a result of local circumstances than of definite long-term plans. The Britisher introduced modern methods of administration and material development, but his interest was hardly altruistic. The English imperialists conquered India to enable the British financiers to exploit it, and the British millowners to undersell the Indian craftsmen. They succeeded through a grand levelling process which shattered the old economy and weakened the old values, traditions, and ideas. The Britisher sought to anglicize, christianize, and mechanize Indian life. The consequences of this policy were, however, entirely unforeseen. The imperialist process

of grand levelling and the imperialist logic of dead level ultimately led to a political as well as a cultural revival, which could hardly have been desired by the Britisher, for it could never suit the British interests. A new class of English-educated Indians appeared who had no faith, and who were bound to be inquiring, doubting, and reasoning. The political ideas of Europe on which they were fed created a new passion for rationality, and the resultant spirit of enquiry inevitably led to the emergence of a new national consciousness. This, however, did not mean the total extinction of India's ancient spiritual heritage. The very process of anglicization created a simultaneous reaction in favour of India's own religion, culture, and traditions. The Britisher's theories of racial superiority, divine dispensation, and 'white man's burben' provoked the urge for political progress, and finally excited agitation, terrorism, and non-cooperation. The British technique of *divide et impera* caused fusion no less than disintegration.

One enduring effect of British rule was, however, secularization through rationalization and liberalization. But, secularization could not be either radical or complete, and its inevitable reaction took the shape of revivalism and narrow reactionism. This led to a revaluation of the Western civilization, and many were repelled by its gross materialism. The educated classes also began to regain their faith in the verities of their own culture. They refused to abandon these in favour of the new values. The emergence of spiritual leaders like Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Dayananda Saraswati, and Vivekananda shows that India's spirituality was too potent to be liquidated by the Western sciences, or by the anglicizing and denationalizing power of foreign rule. These pioneers of Indian renaissance succeeded in rescuing some of the fundamentals of our cultural heritage from the onslaughts of Western unbelief. Mahatma

Gandhi was the culmination of this process of reawakening of India's spirit. His life and message symbolize the reassertion of the ancient idealism and spirituality of Indian culture as against the materialism and militarism of the West.

While the British rulers sought to weld India into one imperial unit, they fostered separatism, communalism, and a neo-feudalism as a matter of policy so that the Indian advance towards national unity could be effectively countered. They aimed at creating a politically integrated but morally disintegrated India. Insistence on communal, feudal, and other minority rights and privileges formed the keynote of British policy which has finally led to the partition of India, and which has hampered the growth of common citizenship on a secular footing. The rule of law as introduced by the British merely aggravated the evils of political subjection, and planted the seeds of hate and obscurantism which still remain a tragic legacy of British rule.

The British rule failed in other respects too. It paralysed the economic life of the masses, for the Britisher exploited the country for his own national interests. It shattered the military strength of the people by creating a purely mercenary army of sepoys under the exclusive control of British officers. In the domain of culture, it discouraged India's own art, architecture, and literature. What advance was made by the people came in spite of opposition, apathy or neglect. The Britishers boasted of their religious toleration, yet they were guilty of studied partiality to Christians and Muslims. Their much-vaunted rule of law did not promote real social justice, for it was based on discrimination—racial or communal. Their educational policy which was vitiated by selfish motives allowed India's old culture to be neglected, or suppressed, while it gave no serious encouragement to higher technological or industrial training. In the administration, Indianization commenced on a paltry scale in recent times, and it proceeded so slowly that it remained more

or less nominal until almost the other day. The Political and Diplomatic services were closed to the Indians throughout, and the higher military cadres were beyond the reach of the Indians till the last World War. Constitutional reforms were conceded after the Mutiny in such a tardy and niggardly fashion that the government remained bureaucratic and despotic till almost the transfer of power. In the international field, India was made to remain a helpless satellite of Britain and a source of cheap labour for the British colonies. Indian interests were consistently subordinated to those of the ruling race, and the Indians were no better than hewers of wood and drawers of water in the British empire. The disabilities under which they always suffered from European racialism have survived to this day.

The record of British rule is, therefore, anything but glorious. The economist could impute India's appalling poverty to British rule. The educationist could hold the British responsible for India's insufferable illiteracy. The politician could indict the British for having planted the seeds of separation and partition by the policy of divide and rule. The social reformer could accuse the British of having caused moral degradation by encouraging double-dealing, toadyism, litigiousness, and corruption. The man of religion could attribute the growth of atheism, agnosticism, and materialism likewise to British rule. The artist blames the British rulers for having neglected India's art traditions. The businessman and industrialist could find fault with the anti-Indian bias of the British government in matters of trade and industry.

But, the legacy of the British is not all dismal and dreary. An impartial student of history cannot ignore the contributions that the British have made to the growth of our national life. British conquest was an unedifying process, yet it at least unified and modernized India and prepared the ground for the eventual culmination of India's

nationhood. The unification of a disintegrated and politically decomposed India as also its material development by railways, telegraphs, and other scientific means constitute no mean achievement, and all this imposed by force of arms and diplomacy was, despite its destructive character, the necessary condition to a fresh regeneration. English education stimulated national feeling and broke up India's mental inertness. It opened the way also to the new sciences and technologies and ideologies of the West. British rule may thus be likened to the indispensable

clearance of the stubble that precedes fresh sowing.

The greatest achievement of British rule was, however, the maintenance of peace and order through military occupation and bureaucratic autocracy, for the long peace that India enjoyed under foreign rule gave full play to the processes which have shaped India's regeneration in modern times.

British rule in India has come to an end as an historical event, but its effects are far too tangible to be overlooked or forgotten.

## EAST AND WEST\*

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

It is a pleasure and an honour to participate in the dedication ceremony of the Community Church of New York. On behalf of India and of the Hindu community in New York City, I offer warm felicitations to Dr John Haynes Holmes, his worthy associate Mr Donald Harrington, and the devoted members of the Church on this historic occasion, when their noble dream of building a permanent place of worship for the Community Church has been realized.

The Community Church performs a vital function in the religious life of our great city. Among its many noteworthy achievements I wish to call attention to only two.

Dr Holmes preaches the harmony and fellowship of faiths. Here in this temple, under his inspiring guidance, a Christian, a Hindu, a Jew, and an Agnostic commune with the Highest. They all regard this church as their own. Ladies, and gentlemen, we all talk about religious toleration. Community breakfasts, inter-faith dinners, and round-table

conferences are organized to promote it. But a true harmony of religions is far from realized in actual practice. It will indeed be a great day in the religious history of the world when, in Christian churches, the prophets, Incarnations, and saints of non-Christian faiths are officially honoured; and likewise, when the Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, and Jewish places of worship demonstrate their sincere appreciation of faiths other than their own. Today the real problem is not to prove whether Christianity or Hinduism or any other religion is the true revelation of God; it is to present a united front of all the religions against the mounting tide of atheism, with its mechanistic interpretation of life and the universe. As Benjamin Franklin said, in discussing the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America: 'Either we hang together or we shall all hang separately.'

Religious bigotry has been responsible, to a great extent, for discrediting religion in the eyes of modern men and women. There are, indeed, enough religions to hate one another; but there is not enough religious spirit to bind men in a common quest for truth. Re-

\*Address before the Community Church of New York at the dedication of its new building on October 17, 1948.

ligion is a path to realize God. The *Vedas* say : 'Reality is One : sages call it by various names.' Ramakrishna often repeated that the different religions are so many paths, all leading to the hilltop of one and the same God-consciousness. They are not contradictory, but complementary and suited to different tastes. What we need is not toleration of other faiths, a niggardly admission of certain acceptable features in them, but an unreserved and wholehearted reverence for all. A devotee of one religion need not accept for himself the form of worship of another, but he should discover that underlying all rituals and strivings is the sincere yearning of the worshipper to be led from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death, disease, and suffering to Immortality. The universal religion which we all seek is not to be created. It already exists and has only to be discovered. As the worshipper transcends rituals and forms he finds in his own faith the universal truth. God is the universal religion. 'On Me,' Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'all faiths are threaded, like the pearls of a necklace.' The way to the realization of the universal religion is to deepen one's own spiritual consciousness. As you walk away from God the gulf between the religions widens. Religions, like the radii of a circle, meet at the centre.

The Community Church, under the leadership of Dr Holmes, emphasizes the essence of religion and thus creates an atmosphere of harmony and fellowship.

The second achievement of Dr Holmes that I should like to mention is the important link he has created between India and the New World. We all know of his unflagging devotion to Mahatma Gandhi and his ideal of love, non-violence, and truth—by means of which, for the first time in the world's history, the Mahatma achieved political emancipation of a nation from alien rule. Ladies and gentlemen, the meeting of India and America is an important event of our times. Its far-reaching

consequences will unfold with the progress of time. Columbus, in his search for the fabulous wealth of India, stumbled upon America. Four hundred years later, in 1893, Swami Vivekananda brought spiritual India into the life current of American history. Dr John Haynes Holmes has put on the mantle of Emerson, who sought the marriage of India and America and who accepted for the motto of the Transcendental movement : *Ex oriente lux*. Today perhaps no two countries of the world are as far apart as the poverty-ridden and scientifically backward country of the Hindus and the materially affluent and technologically advanced United States of America. Yet a bridge is being built to connect these two civilizations—the oldest and the youngest.

India is the mystic of Asia, the heart of the Orient. She is the custodian of an ancient spiritual heritage. The Western civilization, which originated in Greece and several times in history has changed its centre, may find itself under the protecting wing of America. The West has a very great message for humanity. In the meeting of West and East the scientific and the spiritual views of life have been brought face to face. The hope of our survival lies in their harmonization. In the past similar meetings have been followed by great upheavals in the human situation. To this the Greek invasion of India, the Crusades, and the fall of Constantinople bear testimony. Once more an inscrutable providence has brought together the two halves of our One World. They need each other. To-day the East needs the dynamism of America to revive its moribund spirit. The East needs science and technology to pull it out of its social and economic stagnation. India, no doubt, discovered through contemplation certain precious spiritual truths, such as the divine nature of the soul and the oneness of existence ; but she must have the benefit of modern technology to apply these truths in her everyday life. Otherwise they will remain the empty speculations of her pundits.



Modern Western culture, dominated by science and technology, has created a critical condition in the world. If the great discoveries of science are handled by geniuses without spiritual vision and moral responsibility, they may annihilate the whole of civilization. The West needs the spirit of contemplation, in the depths of which are revealed the abiding spiritual verities. It was an Oriental who said, two thousand years ago : 'What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul ?' All strivings and aspirations of man find their fulfilment in the realization of his true Self, which is birthless, deathless, eternal, and everlastingly free.

One cannot imagine a more propitious time than the present for the joining of West and East. May their union bring to birth the world's unborn soul ! It is this hope that enables humanity to bear with patience its present travail.

I have often felt that many intellectual people do not take part in the conventional worship of our temples and churches because

they do not find there a God big enough to satisfy their minds and hearts. It reflects great credit on the Community Church that Dr Holmes has given a satisfying faith to rational minds. Though the core of religion is eternal and immutable, its outer expressions must conform to the changing conditions of the times. As I see it, the religion of tomorrow will not draw its inspiration solely from books or altars, cloisters or cells. The laboratory, the farm, the crowded marketplace, and the industrial plant will also be considered fit places of worship. Man will contemplate God not only with his eyes closed, but also with his eyes open. His every action and thought will be influenced by the knowledge that each human being carries within him a portion of the Divine and that the world he lives in is one. He will realize that life itself is religion. There is nothing to accept and nothing to renounce.

The appeal of the Community Church lies in just such an all-embracing interpretation of religion.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The *frontispiece* of the present issue is a picture of the house-boats on the Jhelum, in Kashmir, where Swami Vivekananda and party stayed in the summer of 1898. About this picture Miss Josephine MacLeod, who was in the party and to whom we are indebted for its reproduction, says : 'Swamiji lived in the big boat. It was seventy feet long and had a matting house on top, which in the day time we lifted on the roof, so that there was nothing but windows all round. At night we dropped it and were as snug as possible. We had four of these boats. We gave Swamiji his own. Then there was a dining room boat where we

all met. Mrs Ole Bull and I had one. Nivedita and Mrs Patterson, the wife of our Consular General, had the other. ... Under these trees we used to make our own butter.'—(Miss MacLeod, Tantine-Joe Joe). ...

We are also indebted to Miss MacLeod for the reproduction of the picture of Mr Samuel Hale's house in Chicago. (*Facing Page*). Regarding this photo of Mr Samuel Hale's house where Swamiji lived, she says :

'This is Hale's home in Chicago where Swamiji lived. One day somebody wrote Mr Hale that Vivekananda was not fit to live in the same house with young women. Swamiji knew this had happened and waited. He overheard Mr Hale saying to his wife,



THE HOUSE OF MR. SAMUEL HART AT CHICAGO, WHERE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA  
LIVED FOR SOME TIME.



"Well, Mary, if that man is a fraud I'll not believe in God."

"The Hales were very well off, and Mary Hale, the daughter, married Mr Matinee in Italy. She always read Swamiji's works. Never got away from him. During my travels I was in Florence, where Mary was living, and on my way to the station I stopped to visit her. I said to her, "Well, Mary, I see you are always reading Swamiji. But he is poor. Why don't you give him some money?" And she sent him \$. 15,000."

Swamiji has frequently referred to the Hale family in his letters. One letter in particular is to be found on page 116, letter No. 75, *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 3rd edition....

The present issue opens with an unpublished letter of Swami Vivekananda written to Miss Josephine MacLeod. A facsimile of the letter in which the Swami himself explains the meaning of the Emblem of the Ramakrishna Mission and the motto is given along with a transcription of it in printing types. The Emblem, as many of our readers may be aware of, was drawn by the Swami himself....

The present month's editorial attempts to envisage, even in the limited time-perspective of the last half-century and in the space-perspective of the entire world of today, the capital part India may play, provided we are intelligent and energetic enough to see and act upto it, in a common civilization of mankind in the future....

There is a tendency among persons not acquainted, or only imperfectly acquainted with the greatness and future possibility of Sanskrit to look at it in the same way as people in the West look at Latin or Greek, that is to say, as a language that is dead. But nothing can be more superficial, for apart from its wide prevalence even now, Sanskrit is the language of a culture that has not gone to pieces, but is breathing still and is going to be very much alive not only here but on a far wider scale. Besides this, while thorough

scholarly investigations have been made as regards Greek and Latin, only a fraction of Sanskrit literature is known and that none too well. In her closely reasoned article *The Place of Sanskrit in the New Curriculum* Dr Roma Chaudhury, an old and valued contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*, argues strongly for making Sanskrit a compulsory subject, at least for six years, in the High School. We believe her arguments will be found telling, for nothing can be more harmful to our culture and its healthy development than neglect of Sanskrit in any scheme of Indian education....

Posterity, upto now, has not been fair to the memory of Sister Nivedita. It is sad to reflect that such a life and character and understanding as were hers should so quickly pass out of our view. What she did for us has never been even partially told, though there are a few eminent Indians still living who will bear witness to the profound and far-reaching character of her influence on Indian awakening in a very comprehensive sense. The late Mr S. K. Ratcliffe, one of the distinguished editors of the now defunct but then influential daily, the *Englishman*, in the early years of this century, and one who knew Nivedita intimately, wrote in a memoriam on her in 1913: 'The influences that have gone to the shaping of the New India are still obscure; but this may be said with complete assurance, that among them all there has been no single factor that has surpassed, or equalled, the character and life and words of Margaret Noble.' Mr Dayamoy Mitra who had opportunity in his youth to see Nivedita at close quarters to form some impressions about her in his youthful mind tries to convey some idea of the Sister in his article on *Nivedita's Personality*, which he rightly concludes with the words: 'The time is now ripe when a life such as hers can burst forth in all its effulgence on our national consciousness, filling us with new stimulus and energy to make India as great as she was in the past, or perhaps, greater still, ...'

Dr J. B. Chaudhuri, Principal, Sanskrit College of Calcutta, is a distinguished Sanskrit scholar who has for long been creditably striving for reviving interest in Sanskrit studies. He has also brought to light interesting facts about Sanskrit literature in the middle ages. In the article entitled *Sanskrit Historical Kavyas*, he gives a brief outline of a few Sanskrit historical *kavyas*, written during the middle ages. Considering the fact that historical literature as such is meagre in Sanskrit, the 'classical' sources of Indian history pointed out by the author are bound to be of particular significance from more than one standpoint....

The illustrated article entitled *A Pilgrimage to Puri* by a Wanderer recounts the musings and impressions of his visit to Puri and Bhubaneswar....

In *Physics and Metaphysics : A Vedantic Approach* Sri Prabas Jiban Chaudhury points out that science and metaphysics should be kept clearly apart in order to avoid confusions that are inevitable if their distinct spheres and methods are not recognized. Science, limited by its peculiar methods, is unable to explain reality as a whole; the knowledge it yields is, therefore, strictly limited. But there is a felt demand in us to transcend the limited relative knowledge of science. This demand lies at the root of metaphysical effort, which relies on the intuitive as opposed to the deductive-inductive, logical method of science. Vedanta, therefore, as the writer points out, contains the germ of the solution of the problem of substance, that has so far baffled science, which is based exclusively on empirical methods....

It is a common tendency of the human mind to picture the ideal characters it adores as perfect in all details right from the start of their life. This, of course, arises from a deep psychological necessity of man at a certain stage of development. But the tendency can be easily overdone, and fail of its main purpose by repelling a more analytic mind. Thus, fact as well as fiction may be

thrown overboard in impatient haste. The inner history of struggle of saints remains generally hidden from our gaze, a knowledge of which will undoubtedly benefit many spiritual seekers. Mira's life is a case in point, its early and historical part being almost entirely submerged under a mass of legends. Mrs C. K. Handoo, who knows well the literature on Mira, tries to give in *The Sadhana of Mira Bai : Gleanings From Her Songs* a picture of the human and struggling Mira on the basis of her songs, and thus brings her closer to the common heart.

### SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI ON SWAMI DAYANANDA AND HIS MISSION

India is fortunate in having at this juncture Sri C. Rajagopalachari as head of the state. The public utterances of His Excellency mark him out as a man of mature wisdom and deep understanding. In fact they put him, so far as the deeper issues of life are concerned, on a level above others charged with the government of the country. Speaking at the sixtyfifth death anniversary of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, at Ramlila Grounds, New Delhi, on 31st October 1948, His Excellency observed on the services of Swami Dayananda and the future of the Arya Samaj in the following way :

'Our religion,' the Governor-general said, 'was founded by and added to, from time to time by some of the greatest souls that ever walked this earth. Their one passion was the quest of truth. They dug into the mysteries of mind and matter with a will and an energy and a poise of reason and emotion unsurpassed by any other people in the world. It is our special good fortune to be born to such a rich inheritance. If, instead of using and benefiting by an inheritance, we feel it to be a millstone round our neck, no one but ourselves are to blame.

'Truth is one and eternal. But by reason of the natural limitations of the human mind, it is discovered by us only in parts. At any given moment there is a sum-total of knowledge, which has to be collected and synthesized without prejudice or passion. A continuous re-adjustment is necessary so that the sum of truth in our possession at any given time may be combined into a whole. Previous conquests over darkness handed down to us will serve as safe stepping stones and not

hindrance, if we do not erect impassable barriers between old and newly found knowledge.

In an integration of ancient truth with modern knowledge lies the only way to life to which we are entitled. Ancient wisdom should not be treated as a thing apart from modern truth. Just as the material wealth of our forefathers has merged into our own resources, so also must the moral wealth inherited from them flow into and become one with modern truth and wisdom.

There is no reason whatever, why the religion of the Hindus should in any respect be unsuitable for modern times. Our forefathers could not and did not intend to provide for all time. They gave us more than the forefathers of any other people ever gave to them. They left a tradition of wise conservatism for ensuring continuity of culture. The safeguard is for providing against decay and destruction. They did not prohibit re-adjustment to modern knowledge. Failure to re-adjust must lead to decay and destruction. It is our own fault, not that of our forefathers, if we misinterpreted protective conservatism into a death-trap for truth.

Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati was among our people a hundred years ago. The religion of our forefathers was at that time sore pressed by modern science on the one hand and by Christianity on the other. The chronic attack of Islam was also there. The fault was not in the *rishis* who gave us the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* but in us. The Maharshi diagnosed the disease and he treated the cause surgically, by a process of bold excision. In this his method differed from some other great men, for example Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who applied an all-embracing tolerance and understanding which dissolved all barriers and made the crudest parts of Hinduism as good as the highest. The goal is the same, but the approaches differ.

Swami Dayananda strove by a process of merciless chopping off to make the ancient forest habitable for modern life. Let us not convert the result of his labour into another obstinate sect; but rather, let us understand the purpose and meaning of his noble effort and strive to fulfil it as he wanted it, viz. to make Hinduism a habitable tenement for progressive modern life, a religion whose culture, tradition, and tenets make no compromise with evil, but offer no impediment to human progress. If there is one religion that followed the scientific method in the search for spiritual truth, it is the religion of the Upanishadic teachers. If the *rishis* were told that, out of deference to them, new knowledge would be kept apart and their teachings would be protected in isolation, they would have been shocked.

They would have condemned it as the greatest act of heresy in the worship of truth.

The present phase of Hinduism is a period of re-absorption and integration of all reforming sects. It will of course mean a certain amount of self-effacement of denominations. Pride is the enemy of truth as well as of human welfare. Swami Dayananda's aim can be fulfilled only by re-absorption of his reforms as well as of the Sikh *gurus*, the Brahma Samaj and all others into Hinduism as a whole.

Truth is automatically self-effacing. This is the very nature of truth. If any reforming school resists this self-effacement and seeks to live apart from that which it is its function to reform, thenceforward it begins to rot and decay. The unreformed may indeed prove better than the isolated reformer-denomination, for age gives a power all its own.

Swami Dayananda's teachings have permeated wide, and a stage has been reached when they can no longer form a denomination apart, but must live in the soul of Hinduism itself. And this has been the trend of thought and of action on the part of all Arya Samajists.' (A.P.I.)

We have quoted nearly full of the speech, because of its merit and real understanding.

The reform movements of the last century in India arose as responses to the challenge of Christianity and materialism of the West to Hindu culture. Hindu society had become narrow and stagnant and failed to recreate new forms in accordance with the novel factors. But history does not have a stop, and a culture which imagines that it can emancipate itself from history goes to pieces. This fact has now been grasped by the Hindu society in general, thanks mainly to the recreation of the original vedantic tradition by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. But a no less serious mistake can be made by those who think that they can write off their entire past and live apart from the oecumenical tradition of Hinduism. Such attempts will inevitably mean, as in the case of decadent and narrow Buddhism, that history will get such movements by the throat. The observation of Rajaji need to be taken to heart by all the different religious denominations in India.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF THE BEAUTIFUL.**  
**By DEWAN BAHADUR K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRY.**  
**FOREWORD BY SACHIVOTTAMA SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI**  
**AIYER. Illustrated with 13 monochrome plates.**  
*Published by The University of Travancore.*

Not a mere theorist but one who has achieved a name for poetry, drama, and criticism in English, Sanskrit, and Tamil, Sri Ramaswami Sastry seeks here to define the Beautiful in Indian Art with the help of its surviving manifestations in architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music, drama, and dance in India. This is a learned and synthetic disquisition indeed, tracing the origin of all art, philosophy, and life to the manifestation of God in Nature through form, colour, and sound. God's creation has genesis in His sportive mood, charged with the Bliss of Self. Sri Shankara implies this in his statement, 'On the vast canvas of the self, the Self itself paints the picture of the various worlds, and the Supreme Self seeing itself therein derives great Bliss.' This is the basis of all Art. God's creations, with His essence in them, can never fail to be blissful, beautiful and good (Cf. Plato, Plotinus, Dionysius, St. Aquinas, Baumgarten and others) in their own endeavours at creation, in moods of consecration and surrender unto Him, for 'He is devotion; He is worship; He is liberation and its means; He is the Ruler of all beings, and the Root-cause of all that is past, present, and future (Cf. V. 134 of *Svatmanirupadam*). Thus Advaita has played not a little part in the evolution of the perfect Concept of the Beautiful—a concept which is synthetic, comprehensive, and intreads all the 'aspects of art' in all lands and conditions. The artist is one 'who has realized the supreme Truth giving up everything, such as form, caste, etc. and who abides in Self, in infinite Consciousness, and Bliss.' (Cf. V. 40 of Shankara's *Atmabodha*). Therefore Art which has its beginning in sport (*Lila*), has its end and fruit in sport alone, which connotes a blissful union with the Fount of all life. Thus Art becomes a *sadhana* in the endeavour to see itself in the Supreme Self, irrespective of the vehicle, the form it employs in the bargain. A perfect artist is, therefore, the unconditioned Lord in the infinite realm of creation which bows down to his will. (Cf. *Agni Purana* and Shelley). It is not an empty boast of India that its Vedic and Upanishadic thought influenced the Grecian philosophy and aesthetics, which are the sources from which all the European concepts of the Beautiful are derived.

Against this spiritual background of *Ananda* (Bliss), and *Rasa* (Aesthetic flavour) the learned author examines Architecture, and the Fine Arts, and their different styles, the Northern and the Southern, and bewails the Westernized modern productions. He adjures the

'progressivists' especially to put the clock back to the Vedic times, if they mean to lead the rest of the world to peace and plenty. The author is at his best when he evolves his concept of the Beautiful through literatures, Indian and European. The mention, and short descriptions, of (a) some at least of the popular *mudras* like the *vitarka*, *simhakarna*, *bhushavarsha*, *pataka*, *kataka*, *shukhi*, and *ardhachandra* among the *asamyuta* ones, and the *anjali*, *garuda*, *khatva*, *matsya*, *kurma*, and *samkha* among the *samyuta*; (b) the distinctive traits of *bharata-natya*, *kathakali*, *kathak*, *mohini-attam*, *kuchipudi* and *manipuri* among dance styles; (c) the distinctive features of the North Indian and South Indian music, and some at least of their *sampurna ragas* like the *thodi*, *kambhoji*, *kalyani*, *samkarabharana*, *bhimpalasi* etc; and (d) the essential differences in the various schools of painting, the Rajput, the Mughal, and the present Bengali and the Andhra, together with their symbolic and emotive qualities, would have helped the reader to appreciate his art-heritage better. For both Indian music and Indian dance had their great inspiration in the *tantric* ritual of worship which, our ancients had powerful reasons to believe, established an easy road to the Godhead for many.

Besides one does not fail to notice the learned author's apologia for Raja Ravi Varma's art and his high opinion thereof, in the face of the author's own spiritual doctrines about Art, which cut the ground from off his feet. His tirade against the Bengal artists is too general and unqualified. It cannot be justified, if one has seen 'Queen Tishyarakshita' and 'Kajri' of Sri Abanindranath, 'Sara' Bree', 'Annapurna', 'Siva of the Himalayas' etc. of Sri Nandalal, 'A Tryst in the Heavens' and 'Sri Kali' of Ukil brothers, 'Relativity' of S. K. Dhar, 'The Evening Glow' and 'At Dawn of Day' of Charu Chandra Dey, 'Kaliyadaman-Krishna' of Aswini Kumar Roy, 'Chitrangada' of Pratima Devi, etc. Mr. Sastry's statement on p. 98 that 'Indian painting achieved brilliant results in the past, but its achievements are not comparable to the wonderful achievements of Italian Painting ...' has no legs to stand upon in the face of the existence still of 'The Meeting of Laila and Majnun' by Hakim Khan, 'The Conquest of Ceylon by Wijayo' and 'Padmapani' etc. of Ajanta, the various 'Queens of Beauty' of Sigiriya etc. among our ancient; of 'Sandhya Gayatri', 'Gajendra Moksha' of an unknown artist, 'The Bride', 'The Golden Rain', 'Buz Bahadur and Rupamati', 'The Divine Cowherd' etc. among the medieval, and of the abovesaid of the Bengal School among the modern paintings, which are as good as, if not better than, 'Mona Lisa' and 'The Last Supper' of Leonardo da Vinci, 'The Birth of Venus' by Botticelli, 'The Adoration of the Magi' by Albert Durer, 'The Immaculate Conception' by Murillo etc.

If *ananda* is a self-effacing spiritual joy it can never

be cross-grained, as the author says on p. 3, by being 'that exquisite mixture of *ananda* and agony ...'. Nor can there be 'Realism in Idealism' in the common import of the terms. They are mutually exclusive as the author himself implies in his reliance on Shakespeare's and Wordsworth's lines: 'Gives to airy nothings a local habitation and a name', and 'The light that was never on sea or land. The consecration and the poet's dream,' respectively on p. 5. He would, however, be right, if realism is truthfulness to species or genus, biologically. Since highest Art is free, transcendent, infinite, and eternal, it is unconditioned by our adjectives like 'realistic, idealistic, classical, romantic' etc. Besides there is a lurking confusion between the Hellenic and the Indian ideals of Art. If Idealism, both Indian and Platonic, has its roots and prototypes in divine patterns (Vide *Kathopanishad*, Plato's *Republic*, *Ion*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo* etc.) the Hellenic art based solely on the perfection of the human form made up of well-formed muscles and limbs and buxom rotundity is not really idealistic in the Indian sense. For there would have been no justification then for the injunction, *deva bhutva devam yajet* (By becoming God worship God). In the best 'idealistic' specimen of Grecian Art it is the intellect that combines the various perfect parts into a perfect whole; whereas in the Indian idealistic type it is intuition and vision (after a devout consecration unto God) that fuse the parts together with the grace of the artist's *Ishtadevata*. The Buddhistic sculpture and iconography are not really 'confined to an expression of the body in repose'. This is true only of the *dhyani* Buddhas, and not of the Jataka depictions etc. at Ajanta, Amaravati, Boro Budur etc.

Despite the above limitations, the book is really a good supplement to the authoritative ones of Dr. Coomaraswami, Brown, Havell, and Fergusson; for while it refutes some of their inferences, it also supplies many of their omissions. The author's plea for the founding of a Central Academy of Fine Arts and Letters for educating Indians for the task of a proper assessment of their art-heritage and of broadcasting the same to the world at large for its appreciation and spiritual benefit, is quite timely now that we have attained freedom.

The book has an elegant format but contains a lot of typographical errors.

P. SAMARAO

**CENT PER CENT SWADESHI. OR THE ECONOMICS OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.** BY M. K. GANDHI. Published by the Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 3rd Ed. Pp. 132, Price Rs. 2.

This book is a collection of Gandhiji's writings in the *Harjan* for over several years on the subject of *swadeshi* as also those of Mahadev Desai and others on it. The subject roused the interest of many during the fight for the political freedom of the country, and

many are the queries that are posed from several points of view and answered by Gandhiji exhaustively in his own inimitable way. For Gandhiji *swadeshi* was of lesser importance as a means for political fight than as a means of economic uplift of the masses. He derives the principle of *swadeshi* from the principle of *swadharma* and interprets it from a spiritual standpoint. He has spiritualized the conception of *swadeshi* as he has done many an other subject. Its application is not confined to India; other countries may as well apply it adapting its working to suit the needs of their masses.

It is not a fact, as a reading of the book shows, that Gandhiji stood against big industries; but he would not allow *swadeshi* workers to advertise for big industries, which are able to look after themselves. He wanted them to concentrate their energies on the useful village crafts which are dying out for want of encouragement and support. He wanted the industries to be revived not in competition with the former but as a means of utilizing the idle hours of the nation, which lives in the 700,000 villages of India and is slowly being impoverished due to the disruption of its rural economy. It is a consuming love of the masses, an agony at their miserable plight and suffering, the living machines behind these crafts reduced to bare skeletons for want of even a square meal, that dictated to him this policy to encourage the village industries even at a sacrifice and to prefer them to the products of the dead machine, though superior in quality, which are able to look after themselves, and which only fill the pockets of a rich few. Ultimately, to Gandhiji, it is the love of the people that matters and that love must express itself, if it is genuine and if it is to be effective, in an effort at alleviating their suffering through proper means, and the one that Gandhiji found suitable was cent per cent *swadeshi*.

The printing and get up of the book are excellent and the price cheap.

**THE GOSPEL OF ISLAM.** BY DUNCAN GREENLESS. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 215. Price Rs. 3-12.

This book is the first volume in *The World Gospel Series* which the Theosophical Publishing House has undertaken to publish in about twenty-five volumes covering all the great religions and important religious sects. This series is intended to bring out in a precise and lucid manner the essence of the various scriptures so that they may be easily understood even by lay men and be available cheaply to the general public.

*The Gospel of Islam* is a collection of some of the verses from the *Qur'an* under suitable heads with their translation into simple prose from the Arabic original, supplemented with notes by the author. The author has brought deep sympathy and understanding to his task. He has provided the book with a nice preface, an



introduction dealing with the life and times of the Prophet, and a synopsis of the contents which add to the usefulness of the book.

A detached study of the book will show that Islam is a manly religion in the sense it exhorts man not to surrender to anyone except God, to live in peace with all, and resist all injustice. It is primarily social in its emphasis and not transcendental; and, as such can be easily understood by the common man. The context in which Islam arose, the fact that the Prophet had to fight defensive wars, and the later history of most of its followers who professed Islam only in name and followed the promptings of their own personal ambitions, indulging in violence and deceit, give to Islam—which means the religion of peace—the appearance of a fanatic and bellicose religion which is not warranted by the teachings of the *Qur'an*. It is very difficult to extricate Islam from the plight into which it has fallen. The author suggests 'back to the *Qur'an*', without caring for any other authority, however high, as a means of bringing Islam to its pristine purity or to what the Prophet wanted it to be. Its aim, as that of every other religion, is to lift man to God. Its teachings were suited to the needs and the capacity of the people among whom it arose.

**LIFE AND MYSELF. VOL. I. DAWN APPROACHING NOON.** By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Price Rs. 6-12.*

This is the first volume of Mr. Chattopadhyaya's autobiography and carries the tale half-way, in his own words, from Dawn to Noon. On the whole, it is well written and holds the attention of the reader almost throughout, though greater objectivity would have given it significance as a personal and social document. The outstanding interest of this volume is provided by the portraits of his parents—the father, Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, physician, scholar, and humanist of extraordinary attainments, and a man of the highest integrity and the truest generosity, and the mother, Varada Sundari, a woman of great nobility of heart, kindness, and courage. The account of Harindranath's meeting with his brother Virendranath is of absorbing interest, giving as it does a vivid picture of Indian revolutionaries abroad in the nineteen-twenties and their heroic struggle against British imperialism. Not much light is thrown by Mr. Chattopadhyaya on the growth of his poetic talent; perhaps we shall hear more in the second volume. It is rather curious that a poet should so often misuse the word 'literally' in the context of obvious metaphors. The book is finely got up, but suffers from a number of avoidable misprints.

A. V. R.

**AN OUTLINE OF INDIAN ART.** By P. RAJESWARA RAO. *Ellore, Andhra, India.*

The writer's aim in this booklet of 63 pages is to introduce the general public to Indian art. He has

divided up his subjects into small chapters on Painting, Architecture, Music, Drama etc. The book has been dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. The treatment though 'cursorial and superficial', to use the author's own words, may prove to be of some use to students who are just beginning a study of the cultural arts of India.

DAYAMOI MITRA

**EYES OF LIGHT—POEMS.** By DILIP KUMAR ROY. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Rs. 4.*

Mr D. K. Roy's volume of poems is an achievement far above the ordinary in what has been called Indo-Anglian poetry. He is not an idle versifier, the victim of poetic clichés, futile rhymes, and echoes of Keats and Shelley. There is substance in his best poems, and he has a fairly adequate command of many metres, including blank verse, and a gift for original imagery and expression. At times he is singularly energetic and effective, as in the descriptive passages in the longer poems. A few of the lyrics reveal true poetic sensibility, but much of his work suffers from mystical and esoteric symbolism, and cannot escape being called 'so misty, so vague.' No doubt the poet is at liberty, as Dr K. R. S. Iyengar who writes the foreword says, to make poetry the medium of mystical experience, incomunicable as it is, but the reader of such poetry is equally at liberty to dismiss it as too insubstantial and remote. Again, there is mysticism and mysticism. Where Mr Roy draws largely on the sources of spiritual experience familiar to most students of Hindu philosophy, he is secure, but when the personal element enters, he is hard to understand. The renderings from the *Bhagavat* are poems of distinct merit and deserve special mention.

A. V. R.

#### BENGALI

**SHILPA KATHA.** By SRI NALINIKANTA GUPTA. *Culture Publishers, 63, College Street, Calcutta.*

Sri Nalinikanta Gupta of Pondicherry Ashram requires no introduction to the Bengali public. He is one of the very few first-rate critics of literary art and aesthetics, who happens to combine a thorough knowledge of Western literary art, especially English and French, with Eastern art and metaphysics. Here we have as many as seventeen articles collected together from his contributions to Bengali journals. He sets before us a rich intellectual fare on themes like Modern Poetry, Mystic Poetry, Sound in Poetry, The Poet and the Mystic, The Poetry of Mallarmé etc. To have dealt with such a varied range of literary topics in a judicious and balanced spirit, with deep insight and in a style which is at once clear and penetrating, is no ordinary achievement. Nalini Babu's book should be in the hands of all our youthful aspirants to literary fame.

DAYAMOI MITRA

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

REPORT FOR 1947

The Deoghar Vidyapith has been experimenting, with laudable success, for nearly a quarter of a century, in putting into practice the true ideal of Education which, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'is the manifestation of the Perfection already in man.' With this as its guiding principle the Vidyapith runs a residential High School on the lines of the ancient Gurukul system adapted to modern conditions. It tries to help each of its pupils to attain the maximum of physical, intellectual, and moral development so that he may be well-fitted for the discharge of the duties of adult life efficiently and nobly.

The twenty-sixth annual report of the Vidyapith reviews its activities as under:

**School Department:** The classes were small, and and individual attention was paid to the pupils. They were encouraged to develop their aptitudes along healthy and useful channels. There were 176 resident students on the roll at the end of the year. Nine boys were sent up for the Matriculation Examination in the year, all of whom got through.

Boys were given regular physical training and they had various kinds of games and sports.

The Literary Society conducted by the boys functioned well. They were encouraged to write papers and deliver speeches on different occasions. The two Quarterlies *Vidyapith* and *Kishalay*, both Manuscript Magazines, came out regularly. The boys also conducted successfully a hand-written daily *Viveka* by name.

The boys were given practical training in domestic duties. Classes in flower-gardening, tailoring, vocal and instrumental music, takli, first-aid etc. were also held to coach the boys. They managed their own Bank and Co-operative Stores creditably.

Religious education was also imparted to them through shrine work, daily worship and conducting *aratikam* etc.

The *Sevaka Samiti* of the Vidyapith boys undertook beneficial activities on various occasions.

Many festivals and the birthdays of the great religious prophets of the world were observed in order to create a spiritual atmosphere in the Vidyapith.

**Library and Reading Room:** At the end of the year there were 5468 books in the Library. The Reading Room was furnished with 20 periodicals and 4 dailies.

**Philanthropic Work:** The Dispensary conducted by the Vidyapith rendered medical relief to about 4000 patients including poor villagers from the neighbourhood.

**Publication Department:** The Vidyapith has a publication Department which has published some useful and valuable books.

**Dairy and Vegetable Garden:** It maintained a

huge Dairy with 72 heads of cattle and cultivated an area of 12 bighas. These departments helped a good deal in improving the nutritive elements of the diet given to the boys and teachers.

The Vidyapith is in urgent need of a separate Prayer Hall to accommodate 300 persons, some class rooms for the lower classes which, for want of accommodation, are being held in dormitories, a water reservoir with a pipe system for supply of water, and a small building for its vocational classes. While thanking all its donors and sympathizers for all the help they have given in the past, the Vidyapith fervently hopes that more and more help would be forthcoming from them to help it meet its immediate and urgent needs.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, LUCKNOW

REPORT FOR 1947

The report under review shows a commendable record of social service and educational activity despite the hardships the Sevashrama had to face due to its unstable financial position.

During the year the outdoor Hospital of the Sevashrama treated 95,501 cases of which 19,382 were new ones.

In the Afternoon School conducted by the Mission there were 75 boys and 10 girls. Thirty-eight boys and adults were studying in the Night School. The Library with over 1,500 books, and the Reading Room with a good number of periodicals, proved to be of great service to the people of the locality.

Under the head, Pecuniary Help, the Mission was rendering help to 3 persons regularly, and occasional aid was also given to 21 persons.

The Milk-Canteen run by the Sevashrama distributed milk free of charge to 4,080 mothers and children.

The Sevashrama celebrated the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and other religious prophets of the world. The monk in charge of the institution conducted regular discourses on scriptures such as the *Gita*, *Upanishads*, etc.

The Afternoon School run by the Mission is in urgent need of a building of its own. The management of the Sevashrama appeal to the charitable public to help them in this regard, and also to strengthen them in their financial position, which is very uncertain now, in order to help it carry on its normal activities.

### RAMAKRISHNA ANNIVERSARY BANQUET, CHICAGO, U.S.A.

The annual Ramakrishna dinner was held on 12 May 1948 at the Hotel Maryland. After the dinner a program of Hindu music was enjoyed and enthusiastically applauded by the guests.

Swami Vishwananda opened the meeting with the following remarks. We have invited you in the banquet hall of a hotel to celebrate the birthday of a great sage, illumined Teacher whom the French Savant Romain Rolland calls the Prophet of New India. The eternal quest of man is to find God. Many dream about God, many long for God vision, and a few strive for God-realization. But the vast majority have to disappear from the stage of the world before they attain the goal. How blessed must be the man to whom the Unknown has become known, the Invisible has become visible, the Transcendental has become real. How precious must be such a life for the world.

This extraordinary life was lived in the noonday glare of the nineteenth century positivism and agnosticism. Like another Buddha, Ramakrishna buried himself in meditation under a banyan tree on the bank of the Ganges. While the advancement of science was making the external world more and more real and was undermining faith in Eternal Verities, Ramakrishna was exploring the inner world and added realization to realization and the crowning realization was that all religions are pathways leading to the selfsame God. Swami Vivekananda brought the ancient wisdom of India and the universalism of Ramakrishna's teachings to the American people.

Dr Robert Browning of the Northwestern University took as his subject the conflict between religion and science. Making the point that the controversy must be resolved by science becoming religious and religion scientific, Mr Browning described the rigorously scientific attitude of Ramakrishna's teaching and Vivekananda's insistence upon a personal method of strict experimentation.

Comparing the external material quest of physical science with the interior spiritual experimentation taught by Vivekananda, Mr Browning warned that it takes time to overcome the temptation to spiritual pride. Referring to Ramakrishna as a great spiritual experimentalist, he concluded with a discussion of the need for a reconciliation of the tension between the absolute transcendental aspect of religion and the personal, individual life as the central problem of modern man.

Swami Akhilananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Boston, traced the growth of spiritual understanding through the written and spoken words of many Western thinkers demonstrating that the deeper the human mind probes into the mysteries of the universe the nearer do the conclusions reached approach the prophetic finalities revealed in Ramakrishna's illumined messages.

Reiterating that Ramakrishna's methods of observa-

tion and personal experiment are open to all, the Swami warned that not everyone may expect suddenly to become an illumined prophet but that everyone may begin at once to advance toward the goal as the Master did a hundred years ago for the validity of religious experience is verifiable by everyone.

The Swami then made a detailed explanation of the nature of religious experience as contrasted with disturbed or pathological mental states. He referred to a recent work in which the author attempted to show that Jesus was a paranoid and stated that anyone who had any doubts as to the validity of religious experience need only study the effects in the life and works of mystics, which do not in any way resemble the illnesses to be observed in mental hospitals. Religious experience, he said, integrates the personality. Mental illness disintegrates.

The Swami mentioned the present spread in American cities of the neo-Freudian vogue and warned of the dangers in a system of psychology which excludes religion as a basic human need. This godless teaching, he said, is invading cities everywhere, even in India, thriving upon the present widespread bewilderment and emotional starvation of the people. Tensions and frustrations, he concluded, both individual and national, can only be resolved by religious realization. Religion is the only way. Ramakrishna shows us the means.

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President, Sri Ramakrishna Math,  
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

FEBRUARY 1949

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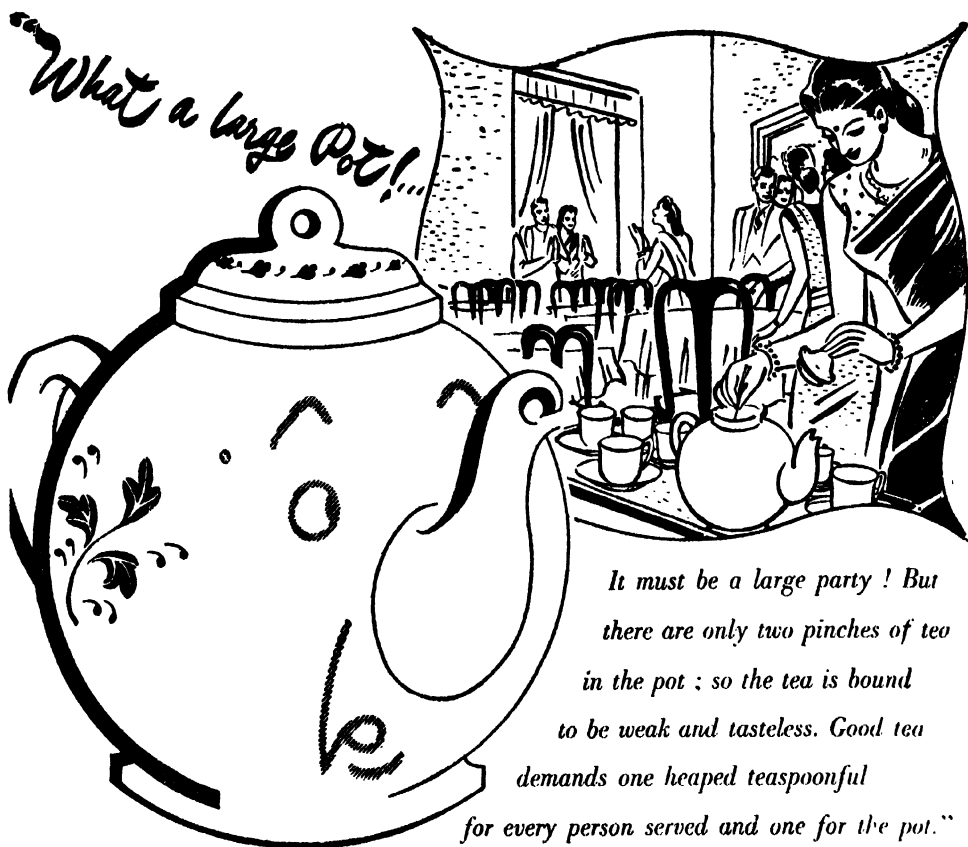
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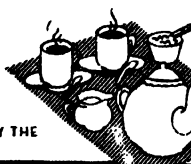
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

FEBRUARY 1949

No. 2



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

10 April 1900  
1719 Turk Street  
San Francisco

Dear Joe,

There is a squabble in New York—I see. I got a letter from Abhedananda stating that he was going to leave New York. He thought Mrs Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait—and Mrs Bull and Miss MacLeod write only good things about him.

Well, Joe-Joe, you know my method in all these rows ; to leave all rows alone !! ‘Mother’ sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired. Joe, ‘Mother’ will work now herself. That is all.

Now, as you say—I am going to send all the money I have made here. I could do it today but I am waiting to make it a thousand. I expect to make a thousand in Frisco —by the end of this week. I will buy a draft on New York and send it or ask the Bank the best way to do it.

I have plenty of letters from the Math and Himalaya. This morning came one from Swarupananda. Yesterday one from Mrs Sevier.

I told Mrs Hansborough about the photoes. You tell Mr Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter.

The only thing I see—is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such if I were you, I will convene a meeting of all the members and sympathizers and ask them what sort of organization they want, if any, etc. But Lordy do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days. I have finished my work here, only out of San Francisco Stockton is a little city, I want to work a few days ; then I go East. I think I should rest now—although I can

have \$100 a week average in this city, all along. This time I want to let upon New York the charge of the light brigade.

With all love,  
Ever yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda

P.S. If the workers are all averse to organizing, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best. I have a letter from Margot from Chicago. She asks some questions—I am going to reply. V.

17 Feb. 1901  
The Math

Dear Joe,

Just now received your nice long letter—I am so glad you met and approve Miss Cornelia Sorabji. I knew her father at Poona—also a younger sister who was in America. Perhaps her mother will remember me as the *sannyasi* who used to live with the Thakoor Sahib of Limdi at Poona.

I hope you will go to Baroda and see the Maharanee.

I am much better and hope to continue so for some time. I have just now a beautiful letter from Mrs Sevier in which she writes a whole lot of beautiful things about you.

I am so glad you saw Mr Tata and find him so strong and good.

I will of course accept an invitation if I am strong enough to go to Bombay.

Do wire the name of the steamer you leave by for Colombo.

With all love,  
Yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda

The Math  
Belur, Howrah  
Bengal, India

Joe Dear,

I can't even in imagination pay the immense debt of gratitude I owe you. Wherever you are you never forget my welfare—and there you are the only one that bears all my burdens, all my brutal outbursts.

Your Japanese friend has been very kind, but my health is so poor that I am rather afraid I have not much time to spare for Japan. I will drag myself through the Bombay presidency even if only to say how do you do to all kind friends.

Then two months will be consumed in coming and going and only one month to stay—that is not much of a chance of work, is it?

So kindly pay the money your Japanese friend has sent for my passage. I will give it back to you when you come to India in November.

I have had a terrible collapse in Assam from which I am slowly recovering—the Bombay people have waited and waited till they are sick—must see them this time.

If in spite of all this you wish me to come I will start the minute you write.

I had a letter from Mrs Leggett from London asking whether the £300 have reached me safe—they have and I had written a week or so before to her the acknowledgment, c/o Monroe & Co., Paris, as per her previous instructions.

Her last letter came to me with the envelope ripped up in a most bare-faced manner! The post office in India don't even try to do the opening of my mail decently!!

Ever yours with love  
Vivekananda

The Math  
Belur, Howrah  
15 May 1902

Dear Joe,

I send you the letter to Madam Calve.

...

I am rather better—but of course far from what I expected—a great idea of quiet has come upon me—I am going to retire for good—no more work for me. If possible I will revert to my old days of begging.

All blessings attend you Joe—you have been a good angel to me.

With everlasting love

Vivekananda

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

DEOGHAR, 1926

On the occasion of the foundation of buildings on the new site of the Vidyapith Mahapurush Maharaj came to Deoghar from Belur Math with many *sadhus* and *brahmacharis*. Thanks to his holy presence the days were passed in great rejoicings. Everybody felt a new spiritual urge in the heart in his holy company. He was also in a very delightful mood in that sacred place. One day, when a large number of the *sadhus* and *brahmacharis* collected round him, a *sanyasi*, asked, 'Maharaj, please tell us a little about your wandering days. We feel a great desire to hear about them.'

Mahapurushji smilingly replied, 'What is the use of listening to old tales? A lot was done at one time; now the Master has dragged us into this life of activity. It is just necessary for the propagation of the *yuga-dharma*, the Religion of the age, preached by him. That is why the Master is getting a

little of his work done by us even at this old age. We had thought that we would spend our whole life in *tapasya*, and we were in fact doing it. But the Master did not allow it to happen. Look at Swamiji himself, he passed away at such an early age due to overwork. How many times did he not go to the Himalayas for practising *tapasya*; but someone dragged him down, as it were, from the lap of the Himalayas. After that he began to tour in many places like Rajputana; he had to do his work through so many rajas and maharajas. In the course of his travels he came to Porbandar. There was no king in the State at the time, and mismanagement of all kinds prevailed. For that reason the Government appointed Harishankar Rao as the administrator. Harishankar Rao was a very learned, intelligent, experienced, and honest person. He had travelled in many places in Europe and had gained a fair

knowledge of French, German, and other languages. He had a very big library in his house, and he himself used to study much. Swamiji was very much attracted by his library. When he expressed his admiration in the course of conversation, Harishankar Rao became very glad and said, "You can stay here and utilize the library as long as you like." Thereafter Swamiji stayed there for some time. Harishankar babu knew Sanskrit well. One day he said to Swamiji, "Swamiji, when I first read the *shastras* (scriptures), I thought that there was no truth in them and that they were merely the fancies of their authors who had written down whatever they liked. But after seeing you and talking to you, that notion of mine has changed; it now appears to me that all our religious books etc. are right. I have seen in the West that the thoughtful people there are especially eager to know about our Hindu scriptures and *darshana* (metaphysics). But they have not as yet found anybody who can rightly interpret these scriptures to them. If you go to the West and interpret our vedic tradition to them you will be doing a great work." Just see how His work gets started. Hearing that Swamiji replied, "It is all right. I am a *sanyasin*, what is East or West for me? I shall go if it becomes necessary." Then Harishankar babu said, "It is necessary to learn French if one is to mix in high societies in the West. Learn French, I shall teach you French." Then he learned French quite well. I was at that time at the Alambazar Math. There was no news of Swamiji for about two years. Nobody knew where he was; he had left us even before the *math* was shifted to Alambazar. One day suddenly a long four-page letter reached us. We could not make out by any means the language in which it was written. Soshi Maharaj and Sarada Maharaj knew a little French. After examining it for a long time they declared, "This looks like a letter from Naren—written in French." We took the letter to Aghorenath Chatterjee in

Calcutta. He was the principal of the Hyderabad State College and had a very good knowledge of French. He read the letter and explained it to us in Bengali. That gave us news about the whereabouts of Swamiji, and further it became known that he had learnt French....

Yes, I was saying that Swamiji wanted to pass his life in meditation, *japa* and *tapasya* etc. But the Great Power which had descended on the earth as Ramakrishna did not permit him to do as he willed, but employed him in the work of preaching the *yugadharma*, the Religion of the age, for the salvation of mankind. He was a prince of yogis, and could, if he wanted, have remained immersed in *samadhi*, but the Master dragged him into intense activity. He has also engaged you all as helpers for the establishment of His *yugadharma*. 'Blessed is he whom He has thus chosen.'

*A sanyasin*: *Tapasya* and spiritual practices also are necessary. You have done so much of them.

*Mahaprawushji*: Yes, spiritual practices are very necessary, so also is *tapasya*. The only way to keep the flow of life directed towards God is spiritual practice. But spiritual practices and *tapasya* are not all of the same kind. That you are doing the Lord's work, bearing so much hardship and battling against so many adverse conditions—this also is a kind of *tapasya*. You should ever keep this feeling awake in the heart that whatever work you are doing is all His work. It is His service—nothing at all is yours. This is also a kind of *sadhana*. He had mercifully made you instruments of His work. Your lives have become blessed thanks to it. Know this for certain that His work for the establishment of the *yugadharma* is not held up for want of a particular individual. He alone who is fortunate can do His work. I have seen many people endowed with good qualities, but the Master does

not accept them. Again some appear outwardly to be worthless and good for nothing ; yet the Master gets so much of His work done by them in an astonishing way. He who gets the opportunity to do His work becomes blessed. That's why Swamiji used to say that He can create a lakh of Vivekanandas by mere wish. We should always have this feeling in the mind that our lives have been blessed and fulfilled by doing His work. Know it for certain that the workers are bound to have love and faith by degrees by continuing to do His work. What you are doing is not in any way less than the *tapasya* of those who are doing spiritual practices, roaming about in hills and forests, and living by begging alms from house to house. 'Atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya' (For one's own salvation and for the good of the world) is the *yugadharma*.

A *sanyasin* : Pride and egoism sometimes appear while one is engaged in work.

*Mahapurushji* : Egoism etc. cannot arise so

long as you have the conviction that you are doing God's work. If the feeling is pure, there is no fear. You must keep up regular practice of meditation and *japa* along with work ; it helps to maintain a proper balance. Even if a little pride or egoism arise, they cannot do much harm. He will iron them all out again by putting you in appropriate situations. And as regards this pride or egoism of which you speak, they also who devote themselves to *tapasya* may come to have the egoistic feeling that they have become great *tapasvis* (doers of *tapasya*). What really matters is that the feeling must be pure. If there be 'theft in the chamber of your heart' there will be neither real *tapasya*, nor true work. If you work, or do *tapasya*, by making your words tally with your thoughts, egoism or pride can never arise in any state. You should always fix your gaze on the ideal, so that you may never forget the aim of life.

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (II)

BY THE EDITOR

The most important and urgent task that faces us today as a people is that of organizing our collective life on a sound basis. In other words it is the task of building up a united Indian nation. But we hesitated to use a term coloured with such a strong political dye. And if we have used it, though reluctantly, it is because the term nation will be a convenient one to start with and also because we shall be able as we proceed to put into it the meaning that we really intend by it. What is going to be the key conception round which Indian national integration will take place? This is a basic and immediate issue. If it is not settled aright and now, we

shall fail to achieve our aims of social and economic progress and of elevating the masses to higher levels of thought and feeling. We need a rallying point. And we should take care to see that the light by which we choose to live will not be put out by storms that may blow.

Our past has an answer to this question, and in recent years the answer has been given anew, backed by that inward spiritual force necessary to realize it. The spiritual power we refer to will gradually work itself out in the course of centuries in creative forms on all the planes of life. Of this we feel no doubt. But because the forces that make



history are impalpable and imponderable and are deeper and slower than things that lie on the surface of the stream of life, they do not make good headlines. And in our estimation the things that make good headlines are the things that matter most. But time has the least respect for things that make headlines in their day. When Christ taught and was crucified, the events created little impression among the vast masses of his contemporaries. But the Caesars and proconsuls who held the gaze of the men of their time have vanished from popular memory and lie buried under the debris of history. Therefore, though the answer to our question is there, it is not widely available. And even in cases where this is not so, it is far from clear.

Instead of coming to the answer directly and straightway it will be better if we do so in easy transition by first looking at the question in the wider perspective of history. In that case the answer, though it may not appear in the full panoply of all historical and logical arguments, may yet come with a force sufficient for our purpose.

The most serious question which has confronted us for the last three centuries and which confronts us still is the 'Western Question'. Around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Western nations on the seaboard of the Atlantic broke out from the narrow tip of Europe and pushed their way all around the globe. The West cast its net wide and drew into it all the peoples and races of mankind. The net holds us still. Of course politically speaking we, like a few others, have just succeeded in emancipating ourselves from it, but this political liberation may mean nothing significant and may even spell our doom in the long run, if we cannot liberate ourselves from its more invisible meshes. Politically we no longer lie flat on the ground. We are on our feet again. And it is just possible that in this hot of freedom we may choose to do what we refused to do in our

bondage, namely, to follow the West in toto. We may make ourselves mere replicas of the West and thus join the band of proletarian nations of the world without a heritage of our own and consequently without a future, for the future lies with a people that is creative and not merely mimetic.

So far as politics is concerned the old days have gone and with them also the old notions. In the modern world the conception of the sovereign national state which until recent years came to be regarded as the greatest new event in history has become dated. The world is ripe for political unity, and we believe this will be achieved in a not far distant future. The facts of world-wide operations of the modern industrial system and consequent economic inter-dependence of peoples are bound to emerge, sooner or later, in some form of world-government. In fact the totalitarian efforts in the last two world wars were unconscious attempts in this direction - in the direction, namely, of translating the existing economic facts into their equivalent political terms. Economic unity of the world demands a corresponding political framework. Totalitarianism failed to achieve, and fortunately so, this unconscious historic aim according to its own conceptions. But though totalitarian attempts have miscarried, unity is bound to come in other ways more in consonance with the secret aim of civilization and the profound and as yet obscure aspirations of humanity.

The conception of the sovereign national state has become anachronistic, but that does not mean that the national idea has lost all force or meaning. The need still remains and will remain, as far as we can see, for the peoples of the world to be organized locally, though upon a new conception, before they can successfully federate in a future world-government. What then should be the conception around which we are to build up our collective life? If we can reconstruct our collective life in accordance with the intention

of history and not in opposition to the dynamic forces of civilization, then we shall not only achieve what we want to achieve but also create a pattern upon which others also may model themselves.

There are only two ways open to us. If we study the history of civilizations we shall find that civilized societies in the past as well as in the present have attempted to integrate themselves round one or other of two conceptions. These conceptions are antithetical in nature and relate to the nature of man and the meaning of progress. One conception views progress as a social event meaning thereby an ever-broadening stream of scientific knowledge and technical aptitude. According to this idea the most important thing in human life is not the spiritual development of souls but the social development of communities. Society and not the individual becomes the end. Individuals are required to immolate themselves before this civic idol. What is of supreme consequence is intellectual development and the 'know how' of the manufacture of gadgets and articles of comfort. Where this conception rules man progressively loses dignity and a sense of inner worth, and he attains his highest fulfilment and becomes fully social by turning into an 'ant-like Spartan or a bee-like communist.' It has become evident that democratic liberty cannot be preserved apart from its spiritual context. The conception of progress as a social event in terms of science and technique is a negation of human personality as a spiritual agent, for a spiritual agent can attain its highest development only in terms of spiritual activity and in spiritual relationship with other spiritual agents and in realizing an Ideal that lies beyond society.

This mundane idea of progress, however, forms the basis of all secular ideologies which aim at creating an earthly paradise by securing a command over non-human nature. Nature and reason are the two gods of such societies.

But in fact real worship is paid to lust and money, for pleasure is the sole aim. The Græco-Roman civilization of the pre- and post-Christian centuries and the modern 'scientific' civilization of the West (with its replicas in Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Japan and other countries) offer two most impressive and brilliant instances of a secular civilization of this kind. The Dark Ages when a Christian conception of society struggled to be born, in vain alas, forms a kind of interregnum between the two. The barbarians made a travesty of Christianity and then put it away as an hindrance to their development. The modern West born at the time of renaissance is a child of Greece and Rome and has repudiated the Christian conception of life.

The Græco-Roman civilization, however, went to pieces, not because it lacked intellectual power or military resources, but because it decayed from within. Its mistaken conception of human personality and, consequently, of good life, created a spiritual vacuum even in the midst of a material plenum. Caesar not only ruled over mundane earth but claimed dominion over men's souls. The Emperor became also the *pontifex maximus*. But spirit will not pay allegiance to matter. No wonder Christianity arose to fill the vacuum. It challenged the worship of the civic idol and humbled the soulless Leviathan to dust.

Today history is repeating itself before our eyes. The secular West is near the brink. The secular conception of society means the organization of a people on a political basis. Politics always turns into power politics unless it can be curbed by a conception that transcends politics. Christendom broke up into national states organized for the pursuit of power and aggrandizement. Uptil now the West has been living upon its inherited moral and spiritual capital, at least in domestic fields. But practice divorced from belief becomes a meaningless gesture and cannot endure. Without faith and a spiritual con-

ception of life man gradually returns to the primitive gestures dictated by glandular secretions. The secular ideology has again created a spiritual vacuum. And unless this is filled with the right sort of stuff, the West will repeat the last chapter of Græco-Roman civilization. The Western half of Europe feels dismayed by Russia as Rome felt dismayed by the barbarian. But Russia is no more barbarian than those who hate and fear her. And she is only shooting back at the West the final product of its own secular ideology. Marxism is a Western conception. The Nazi and the fascist states of Germany and Italy only worked out the conceptions of power politics and of the brigand nation to their logical extremes. But this time the fury caught the Western peoples also instead of only the colonial peoples who have been steadily trampled upon by the 'democracies' for centuries out of the sight of the common man in the West. However, the most significant thing in the European situation today is that the spiritual vacuum in the West is swiftly sucking in the deadly brew of communism—a brew of which the formula is contained in the secular pharmacopeia of the West, but which has been compounded by the Russian apothecary. Communism is Vedanta turned upside down and emptied of its spiritual content. But when the soul is desperately thirsty it will not wait, but will always try to allay its pangs by drinking any liquid, however foul that may be. Heresy thrives where true faith is absent. We do not live without beliefs, and the choice always lies between a good belief and a bad belief.

The secular conception of life, the worship of society and sensation, is going to pull down the structure of Western civilization, unless it can be replaced in time by a just conception of the human person and progress.

In opposition to the above conception there is the other conception of the nature of man and of progress, which forms the core

of the vedic tradition. According to this idea man is a spiritual agent, and progress means the spiritual evolution of souls, that is to say, the progress of individuals. Civilization does not mean social progress conceived in terms of material achievements and physical well-being. Society is never an end, but a means. Civilization means the progression of a spiritual idea in depth as well in extension. Civilization is not a state but a movement. The sum-total of material achievements at a point of time, which are the consequences of man's intelligence, represents only the static, external, and insignificant forms of civilization. Civilization in its material aspects rises and falls and moves in cycles of birth, death, and birth. But one thing runs continuously and develops through them all. It is the consistent march of a spiritual idea. True civilization is the result of factors that pull in different ways— one that tries to take us back to primitive impulsive living and the other which attempts to lift us out of the animal plane to newer and wider levels of consciousness and feeling.

Our ancient seers regarded social history as a reflection on a wider scale of the struggle between good and evil, between the *deva* and the *asura*, which goes on without respite in the deep recesses of the human soul. Have not they said that the real *kurukshetra* where the forces of good and evil are ever locked in deadly combat lies in every heart and that the outer *kurukshetra* is only a symbol and a social reflection of the inner? This is the true story of civilization, which is the outcome of the conflict between man's ancestral memories and his moral and spiritual aspirations. Civilization is therefore conceived in terms of movement and of evolution, but it is evolution not on the plane of matter or of life but on the plane of spirit.

Material achievements and intellectual development may help or retard progress, they do not make it. Progress is achieved by man's conscious fight against evil that does

not really lie outside, but is within him. Evil is not overcome by the blind march of history. Man never becomes good by a mechanical movement, for history is never redemptive as secular ideologies assume. Evil can be overcome only by moral and spiritual force. Further, evil is only an apparent factor of our true personality, the larger part of which, like an iceberg, lies submerged beneath the plane of perception. At bottom man is perfect, and progress means becoming more and more aware of this innate truth. In a word it is the gradual liberation of consciousness from the bondage of matter and of the limited personality. It is a movement towards a unity that is at bottom spiritual.

While civilizations in the material sense come and go, the spiritual idea that forms its soul and dynamic principle marches on. It grows in depth and extension as history unfolds itself. This view must of course be regarded as true within the limits of a complete historical cycle from the *kaliyuga* to the *satyayuga*.

Here we should make a point clear, lest the traditional conception be misunderstood. We have referred to progression in depth as well as in extension. This may cause misunderstanding, if the meaning is not made more explicit. When we talk of progression in depth and in extension the phrase must be taken to apply to masses of men only. For, according to the vedic conception, ethical and spiritual researches have already touched the bottom in the experiences of the great teachers of mankind. Revelation has come in all its fulness to individuals, for one cannot go beyond unity where all differences resolve themselves. There are no more new realms to be discovered. There may, of course, be an analytic and intellectual development of the idea in the terms and accents of a developing concrete situation. Perfection is not a far-off event of history. It is trans-historical, though a perfect individual can be

in history. Perfection is already here and now and has only to be known and not produced by action. But this point cannot be further pursued here, for in that case we shall run into metaphysical tides that will carry us away from our present issue.

Perfection has already been achieved individually, but not collectively. It has not reached mankind as a whole. It has not even come even in a very small measure to the vast majority of men. So progression in depth and extension has reference to these individuals. The spiritual realization of the seers must extend gradually to all men so that it may multiply chances of individual progression in depth. This is progress in the collective and social sense. Social organization and material achievement are necessary for the development of humanity. But once we grasp this idea of progress it is clear that we shall bend our efforts to organizing society and utilizing our achievements in a way that will make spiritual progress possible for all the members of a society, wherever they may stand. Social aim becomes, therefore, the creation of conditions and opportunities for the maximum development of human dignity and personality. Progress in the social sense will mean exactly this, namely, the development in depth and extension of the spiritual idea among the members of a society.

Finally, it is envisaged that the entire humanity will, in future, come into possession of this truth when all institutional devices which hold society together now will fall into desuetude, for love alone will be the sole motive of human action. All our reactions will be governed by the clear light of the supreme Intelligence (*agrya buddhi*) and we shall all act with an inner sense of freedom and poise (*yogabuddhi*) which nothing will be able to disturb. Only such a society, a commonwealth of free individuals realizing the highest potentialities of their spiritual nature and acting as free spiritual agents, will be a truly civilized society. This idea forms

the true content of the phrase, *satya-yuga*, which is not a past idyllic state of nature as imagined by romanticists, but a future state of a perfected humanity. The idea finds an echo in the Christian conception of the

Kingdom of Heaven. But while *civitas dei* is not of this world, the *satya-yuga* is an arc of a complete historical cycle.

(To be continued)

## KALI AND SIVA

By AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE

India is a worshipper of Mother Kali. Kali is represented as eternally marching onward on the breast of Siva. In her onward march She leaves behind Her death and destruction, fear and despair, weakness and wickedness, sorrow and depression, discord and hostility, darkness and ignorance, with skilful movements of Her left hands, and always looks for and advances towards life and light, hope and fearlessness, strength and purity, joy and peace, love and unity, truth and bliss, which Her right hands point to and work for. Though looking ahead and moving forward constitutes Her essential nature, she never loses her foothold on the changeless and tranquil breast of the infinite eternal Supreme Spirit, Siva, that is, the transcendent support and inspirer of all her movements.

To the Hindu mind Kali represents Life-Temporal and Siva represents Life-Eternal, and Life-Temporal is the multiform phenomenal self-expression of Life-Eternal. Life in the universe, Life in the spatio-temporal order, originates from, is sustained by, and is always in touch with the Supreme Spirit, Life beyond the universe, Life above the spatio-temporal order. 'Time is the moving image of Eternity;' 'Kali is the moving image of Siva.' It is in and through Kali that Siva manifests the transcendent glory of His supra-cosmic, self-existent, non-dual life in countless forms of living existences in the temporal cosmic order. In this ever-loving, ever-changing phenomenal order, Life is conceived by the

Hindu mind as truly real; and whatever darkens or veils or overshadows Life, whatever stands in the way of the self-expression and self-fulfilment of life, whatever seeks to devour Life or turn Life into lifeless inert matter or expressionless dark void, the Hindu mind thinks of as illusory appearance, through the conquest and illumination of which Life in the world should progressively realize and fulfil itself. The Indian mind, enlightened by the vedantic view of Reality, looks upon the cosmic order as the triumphant march of Life in and through all the illusory forces of death and destruction, which appear in its way only to be left in the background or transformed into materials of its self-realization. It never recognizes Death as the end of Life, but rather it looks upon Life as the Death of Death, the slayer of the Demon of Death and all its auxiliary forces. The end of Life is not Death, but the perfect self-fulfilment of Life, as eternally realized in the Supreme Spirit, Siva.

The spiritual culture of India teaches us that we, as living beings on earth, should always be worshippers of Mother Kali—worshippers of the great Life-Power triumphantly marching onward in this cosmic order towards the Perfection of Life, by overpowering, piercing through and destroying all the dark forces of Death, which illusorily prevail in this world and stand in the way of the evolution of life. We are taught to worship Kali even on the cremation ground

and to demonstrate thereby our faith in Life and our defiance of Death. We are exhorted to plant the tree of life and to erect the temple of Siva (eternally perfect Life) on the funeral pyre of the dead. We are instructed to put ourselves in touch with this indestructible Life-Power, whenever we find ourselves encircled by the forces of Death, such as epidemic diseases, countrywide famines, foreign invasions, internal feuds, general depressions, bewildering political, social, and economic problems, and so on. We are taught to feel encouraged with the idea that we are living children of the cosmic Life-Power and that we must never submit to the forces of Death.

The living culture of India is based on the faith that Life is more real than Death, that Life must never submit to and can never be crushed by the apparently powerful forces of Death. It is this faith which has given immortality to the culture of India. Whatever objects of experience appear in time and disappear in time are to the Indian mind relatively unsubstantial, and attachment to such objects virtually means courting death. The human life, which has, in the cosmic design, attained the prerogative of consciously and voluntarily directing its activities, should not deliberately stick to such perishable objects or make even the most splendid among them the objects of its ambition and the ends of its endeavours. Life is its own end. It has to perfect itself in and through its activities in this world.

For its own self-perfection, the human life has to cultivate Knowledge, it has to cultivate Power, it has to cultivate Love, it has to cultivate Purity and Goodness, it has to cultivate Beauty and Harmony, it has to cultivate Peace and Unity, it has to cultivate the consciousness of the essential Identity of all life (in whatever diverse forms it may be embodied), it has to cultivate the consciousness of the inner identity of the individual life with the cosmic Life. For the cultivation of these virtues, the human life has to manifest

its intellectual and creative powers in the suitable organization of the family, society, community, State, etc. and in the invention of various instruments and contrivances for the efficient development of human life in and through these organizations. These organizations must never be regarded as ends in themselves. Societies, communities, nations, all these, however powerful and magnificent for the time being, are perishable things, creations of the human intellect, and cannot be worthy objects of exclusive worship to the human life, which has got a taste of its own intrinsic glories. They are good in so far as they furnish the human life with various facilities for its self-development, self-realization, self-perfection. But when they themselves become objects of worship and make the worshippers forget the true ideal of Life, they are converted into demons or forces of Death.

When nations, communities, societies teach men to hate and fear their fellow-men, when they demand falsehood, hypocrisy, narrowness, bigotry, censoriousness, vindictiveness, violence, cruelty, etc. from their members, when they widen the consciousness of difference and create a sense of hostility between individuals and individuals, communities and communities, nations and nations, they become terrible satanic forces for goading human life gradually into the jaws of Death. The self-conscious and self-determining Life in man must judge them by reference to the ultimate standard of value, viz. their conduciveness to the development, expansion, beautification, unification, perfection, and self-realization of Life. All human organizations and institutions are to be regarded as truly serving the purposes for which they are created, when they help in the regulation of the life of each individual and each section of the human race in such a way that the life of each may realize its unity with the collective life of mankind, that peace, harmony, unity, love, and friendship may reign everywhere in the human world, and that the life as embodied in every

individual and every section may be ennobled, beautified, spiritualized, and consciously put in tune with the Supreme Life of the universe. Every individual, every nation, every community must make use of all their fortunes, all their powers and achievements, for becoming self-conscious and free participators in the onward march of the Life-Power of the cosmic order with the Supreme Spirit in view. This is what the worship of Mother Kali truly signifies.

India in her outer life passed through many cycles of light and darkness, peace and disorder, growth and decline, prosperity and adversity, freedom and bondage, hope and despondency. Off and on she suffered terribly from foreign inroads and internal revolutions, from natural catastrophes and human atrocities, from racial animosities, political feuds, economic hostilities and social rivalries. In the long journey of her life she witnessed on many occasions the awful prevalence of the forces of Death. But in her inner national consciousness India never lost faith in her Kali and Siva,—never lost faith in the eventual triumph of Life over Death,—never lost faith in the Spiritual Basis on which the cosmic order stands and the Spiritual Ideal towards which the cosmic order is moving. India has always in her heart of hearts believed that Death is nothing but a phenomenal shadow of Life, and that this shadow can and perhaps must pursue Life until and unless Life is perfectly illumined by the light of its own innermost nature, i.e. until and unless it realizes its identity with Siva, the Supreme Spirit, the eternal conqueror of Death (*Mrityupanjaya*). She has, therefore, never been frightened at the sight of the temporary, apparent predominance of the shadow over the Reality. She has never been either disheartened or tempted by the arrogant splendours of the forces of Death, now and then brandishing their multi-coloured banners in this or that part of the human world.

The Indian culture has accordingly never

accepted the finite and transitory materialistic ideals of life and has never recognized the superiority of those classes or those nations which, pursuing those materialistic ideals, sought to demonstrate their superiority by force of arms or by the show of the outward grandeur of their worldly achievements. The saints and sages of India have, in all ages, taught the people to measure the values of the powers, fortunes, and worldly splendours achieved by individuals or classes or nations, by testing how far they contribute to the refinement and ennoblement and enlightenment of the lives of those who achieve them and those upon whom they exercise their influence, how far they materially help in the establishment of peace, harmony, unity, and cordial relationship in the human society, how far they are conducive to the awakening of the consciousness of Siva in every individual and in every section of mankind. The real progress of individual and collective life is to be measured, not by reference to temporary materialistic successes, but by reference to its moral and spiritual attainments, which lead life onward and onward towards the progressive realization of the perfection which remains hidden in it. This is according to the Indian point of view what constitutes true civilization.

The progressive militarization and mechanization of the human powers and resources, the growing rivalry and hostility amongst nations and communities, the employment of the knowledge of the scientists and the wisdom of the philosophers in the invention of newer and newer destructive weapons and newer and newer ways of organizing the people in the path of hatred and malice, and violence and death, can by no means be accepted by sane human minds as true signs of civilization. As the human nature becomes more and more civilized, and the human institutions and organizations grow with the ideal of true civilization in view, the brutal or military elements of the human nature must gradually disappear, the forces of death

must gradually yield to the forces of Life; peace, harmony, unity, beauty, love, and goodness must prominently reign in the inner character and outer conduct of men in their private as well as public life, Siva should be reflected on the modes of the operations of all organizations and institutions. Individual or collective life, in which these essential characteristics of truly civilized life are absent, must be condemned as uncivilized.

The materialistic ideals of life do not tend to make men progressively civil. With such ideals civility becomes only a matter of prudence and has to be practised only in outer conduct within narrow spheres of human relations for the sake of the material advantages it gives. Civility or refinement of life for its own sake demands higher moral and spiritual ideals, to which materialistic self-interests have to be subordinated and sacrificed. With the progressive civilization of human life, the forces of love and non-violence, of truth and goodness, of peace and harmony, of beauty and gentleness, of sympathy and fellow-feeling, should become more powerful and predominant among all sections of the human race, and the forces of hatred and violence, of falsehood and vice, of conflict and disorder, of wildness and arrogance, of apathy and antipathy—which are all forces of Death—should bow down to those forces of Life, hide their own faces in shame, and vanish. This is what the true onward march of Life demands, this is what the worship of the Divine Mother Kali demands. This is the ideal, which is immanent in Indian culture and civilization, and which has been regulating its course through many ups and downs for thousands of years.

The Indian people, having emancipated themselves from foreign domination, have regained the opportunity to pursue consciously, deliberately, and energetically the ideal of life immanent in the immortal soul of India and to present it gloriously before all the

struggling nations of the world. It will be the mission of India to show the path of immortal life to those modern nations which, infatuated by the apparent splendours of their temporary materialistic achievements, are unconsciously, but surely, advancing in the path of death. While practical necessity compels India to accommodate herself prudently in the association of the war-minded, death-worshipping powerful nations, by which she is encircled, she must never forget that the Presiding Deity of her national existence is Kali, eternally marching onward with Her feet planted firmly on the breast of Siva. Her politics and economics, her internal and external policies, her industrial and commercial enterprises, her social and educational organizations—all these ought to be shaped in consonance with this ideal. She has to develop all the aspects of her national life and to march forward along with the other nations of the present world, but with the ultimate object of realizing Siva in and through all her self-expressions and self-assertions in the material world. In our private as well as public life, in our domestic, communal, national, and international relations, in all our dealings with the forces and phenomena of the world, we must march forward from death to immortality, from bondage to liberty, from falsehood to truth, from disharmony and hostility to harmony and peace, from hatred and violence to love and non-violence, from fear and depression to fearlessness and courage, from impurity and corruption to purity and goodness, from attachment to finite transitory mundane fortunes to devotion to the infinite eternal spiritual perfection of life. We should consciously participate in the eternal, well-ordered onward march of the cosmic Life-Power for giving diversified and harmonized expression to the transcendent, beautiful character of the non-dual Supreme Spirit, and in and through such participation realize the Supreme Spirit within ourselves.



# A NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

By TURIYACHAITANYA

The question of the national language for India has given rise to a vast amount of acute controversy in the country. The selection of the national language cannot be done in a hurry, but should be based on an unprejudiced and mature consideration of several factors. We shall consider here dispassionately the claims of the different languages which have been put forward in this connection.

In India there are two groups of languages : (1) The Indo-Aryan and (2) The Dravidian. The first group consists of Hindi (including its different varieties to which Hindustani and Urdu are akin), Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Pashto. These have evolved from Sanskrit by stages, and though they have developed particular literary styles and their peculiarities as regional languages, in structure and vocabulary they retain their derivative character from Sanskrit. The second group, consisting of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam languages confined to South India, are structurally different, but they too have developed by drawing upon Sanskrit freely, so much so that at present they contain nearly 50% to 75% Sanskrit words.

In addition to this Sanskrit origin of, and influence upon, the Indian languages, Persian, which became in the middle ages the court language of the Muslim rulers in large parts of this country, came in later times to influence to a certain extent the North Indian vernaculars. This influence has been especially confined to words relating to law, administration, and accounts, but has not changed the structure of the languages at all. Again, the spoken languages of the masses even in these areas have not been so much influenced as the written. As a consequence of this the original Hindi language has branched off in

two different styles, namely, the Hindustani, which is greatly influenced by Persian, and Hindi which is not. But the literary form of Hindustani, with Persian script (Urdu), became progressively Persianized and lost touch with the masses. In recent times this has been deliberately done. The literary Hindi with Nagari script has lately become progressively Sanskritic, and for this reason it has lost close touch with the masses, but not to the same extent as Urdu, for the three following reasons : (1) Sanskrit is a living cultural language and though not spoken is used in all religious observances of the Hindus ; (2) it is derived from Sanskrit and from the very early times has been drawing upon it in common with the other provincial languages ; and (3) most of the literature in Hindi is religious. Of course every literary language is removed from the uneducated masses. Therefore that alone is no reason for disqualifying a language from being a national language, for it is not merely for ordinary speech that we use it but for various other purposes.

The claim of a particular language to be selected as the national language must depend upon the following factors : (1) The number of persons who speak it ; (2) its popularity ; (3) its capacity to meet the growing needs of India in the literary, scientific, and cultural fields ; and (4) its ability to be easily fitted into the pattern of the various provincial languages. In the light of the above we shall examine the claims of Urdu, Sanskrit, Hindustani, and Hindi, respectively, to occupy the status of the national language of India.

## 1. Urdu

It is recognized on all hands that literary Urdu though it is well-developed, cannot be the national language 'as it leans on foreign elements' (*Harijan*, 28-11-48 *To The Members*

of *The Constituent Assembly*). Though structurally same as Hindi, its vocabulary is Persianized and Arabicized, and it is spoken and understood by very few people. It is pre-eminently a language used by the Muslim writers. 'There will be at the highest four crores of Muslims in India or about 12 per cent. Of them not more than a few lakhs speak high Urdu; not more than 1 per cent. at the highest. No doubt Urdu was claimed as their mother tongue by Muslims all over the country, even though most of them could not talk even the most indifferent bazaar Hindustani. . . . In fact, the bulk of Muslims in any province speak the same language which the Hindus of the province speak. Whoever heard till of late that the Bengali or Gujarati Muslims did not know Bengali or Gujarati?' (K. M. Munshi—'Our National Language' in *Social Welfare*, 26-12-47).

Of course this does not preclude Urdu from being encouraged and developed as one of the languages in India.

## 2. Sanskrit

Though the chance of selection of Sanskrit as the national language is remote, yet, since many influential and learned scholars have advanced its claim in this regard, we shall briefly examine the subject here.

It has already been observed that all the Indian languages are either derived from Sanskrit or they have been and are being highly influenced by it. It is a matter of common knowledge that Sanskrit is a very old language and has been moulded almost to perfection over several thousands of years, and that Sanskrit literature has grown to immense proportions covering numerous branches of human knowledge. Before the advent of English, it was the all-India cultural language enabling people from all over India to come together and exchange their thoughts and ideas in a common medium. All the important works were written in that

language, and some of them remain unequalled in any literature of the world. There are numerous works of poetry, prose, drama, grammar, prosody, phonetics, various types of arts—music, painting, dancing, architecture and sculpture, mining, metallurgy, physics, chemistry, mathematics (including algebra, geometry, and trigonometry), astronomy, medicine and surgery, politics and economics, science of war, administration, law, ethics, and, over and above all, a monumental literature on religion and philosophy, besides many other subjects too numerous to mention. In short it embodies the culture of India all through her history from most ancient times. It can easily be imagined what an immense and rich vocabulary this language contains. Another great advantage of Sanskrit is that it has a flexible system of roots from which any number of words can easily be coined by adding prefixes and suffixes to yield different meanings with different shades to suit various needs.

And though Sanskrit has ceased to be a spoken language, it is in no sense a dead language as it is used every day in all Hindu religious observances and also on other occasions. Even now there are many people who can fluently speak in Sanskrit, while books and magazines continue to be produced in it (*vide* reviews in the *Sunday Hindu*, Madras) not infrequently. On various ceremonial and public occasions Sanskrit poems and hymns are still composed and sung, and addresses presented. It enshrines and represents the living culture of India, and the language is being studied more and more, and deeply, by both Indian and Western scholars as well as by learned men in other parts of the world. In many of the European and other foreign countries chairs have been created for Sanskrit. Even the 'Afghanistan Government has replaced Persian by their native Pashto as the State language, and for developing Pashto has made Sanskrit a compulsory language in the Arts Faculty of Kabul

University (*vide* Letter to Editor, the *Hindu-  
stan Times*, 26-11-48).<sup>1</sup>

Sanskrit still occupies a position of great importance among the languages of the world. It has close affinity with many European languages, which is the reason for the use of the term Indo-European languages. Sir William Jones observed as long ago as 1784; 'The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either: yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from some common source which perhaps no longer exists ...' (Quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India*, p. 182). Such being the case, technical terms drawn from Sanskrit will be akin to those derived from Greek and Latin, from which the European languages are constantly drawing for the developing needs of science. Even the Persian language belongs to the Indo-European group and, in its older forms, has great resemblance to Sanskrit.

Apart from this, Indian culture spread in the past in various countries of Asia with the result that Sanskrit influenced the local languages—to a considerable extent, in many cases.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has brought out many other points in *The Discovery of India*. While we can only quote briefly from it we

would recommend the readers to go through it fully (*The Vitality and Persistence of Sanskrit*) :

'A language is something infinitely greater than grammar and philology. It is the poetic testament of the genius of a race and a culture, and the living embodiment of the thoughts and fancies that have moulded them.' (A national language should reflect these.) 'Sanskrit, like other classical languages, is full of words which have not only poetic beauty but a deep significance, a host of associated ideas, which cannot be translated into a language foreign in spirit and outlook.' 'Our modern languages in India are children of Sanskrit and to it owe most of their vocabulary and their forms of expression. Many rich and significant words in Sanskrit poetry and philosophy, untranslatable in foreign languages, are still living parts of our popular languages. And Sanskrit itself, though long dead as a language of the people, has still an astonishing vitality.'

'For how long Sanskrit has been a dead language, in the sense of not being popularly spoken, I do not know. Even in the days of Kalidasa it was not the people's language, though it was the language of educated people throughout India. So it continued for centuries and even spread to the Indian colonies in South-East Asia and Central Asia. There are records of regular Sanskrit recitations, and possibly plays also, in Cambodia in the seventh century A.C. Sanskrit is still used for some ceremonial purposes in Thailand (Siam). In India the vitality of Sanskrit has been amazing. When the Afghan rulers had established themselves on the throne of Delhi, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Persian became the court language over the greater part of India and, gradually many educated people took to it in preference to Sanskrit. The popular languages also grew and developed literary forms. Yet in spite of all this Sanskrit continued, though it declined in quality. Speaking at the Oriental

<sup>1</sup> Sardar Ghulam Mohammed Khan, *Charge d'Affaires* for Afghanistan in Delhi, in a letter to Mr. Ghanshyam Singh Gupta, Speaker of the Central Provinces Assembly, who made an inquiry in this connection, says: 'Persian and Pashto are direct descendants of Sanskrit and still maintain a large vocabulary derived from Sanskrit. The idea of the introduction of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject in the University is to make Pashto a more scientific language and to develop it to a better standard.'

Conference held in 1937 at Trivandrum, over which he presided, Dr. F. W. Thomas pointed out what a great unifying force Sanskrit has been in India and how widespread its use still was. He actually suggested that a simple form of Sanskrit, a kind of Basic Sanskrit, should be encouraged as a common all-India language today ! He quoted, agreeing with him, what Max Muller had said previously: "Such is the marvellous continuity between the past and the present in India, that in spite of repeated social convulsions, religious reforms, and foreign invasions, Sanskrit may be said to be still the only language spoken over the whole extent of that vast country .... Even at the present moment, after a century of English rule and English teaching, I believe that Sanskrit is more widely understood in India than Latin was in Europe at the time of Dante."

I have no idea of the number of people who understood Latin in the Europe of Dante's time ; nor do I know how many understand Sanskrit in India today. But the number of these latter is still large, especially in the South. Simple spoken Sanskrit is not very difficult to follow for those who know well any of the present-day Indo-Aryan languages—Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. Even present-day Urdu, itself wholly an Indo-Aryan language, probably contains 80% (?) words derived from Sanskrit. It is often difficult to say whether a word has come from Persian or Sanskrit, as the root words in both of these languages are alike. Curiously enough the Dravidian languages of the South, though entirely different in origin, have borrowed and adopted such masses of words from Sanskrit that nearly half their vocabulary is very nearly allied to Sanskrit.

Books in Sanskrit on a variety of subjects, including dramatic works, continued to be written throughout the medieval period and right up to modern times. Indeed such books still appear from time to time, and so do Sanskrit magazines. The standard is not

high and they do not add anything of value to Sanskrit literature. But the surprising thing is that this hold of Sanskrit should continue in this way throughout this long period. Sometimes public gatherings are still addressed in Sanskrit, though naturally the audiences are more or less select.

It is interesting to note that in modern Thailand when the need arose for new technical, scientific and governmental terms, many of these were adapted from Sanskrit.

The language of Ceylon is Singhalese. This is also an Indo-Aryan language derived directly from Sanskrit. ... Sanskrit, it is now well recognized, is allied to the European, classical and modern languages. Even the Slavonic languages have many common forms and roots with Sanskrit. The nearest approach to Sanskrit in Europe is made by the Lithuanian language.

Sanskrit is a unifying factor not only of the languages of India but also as between the North and the South. It maintains the cultural continuity and homogeneity of India and provides a strong link among the various provinces in respect of ideas and a common moral and spiritual outlook.

We may also note in this connection what Swami Vivekananda said in regard to Sanskrit. He declared that in India Sanskrit and prestige go together. It imparts culture—not mere knowledge—which alone provides—and has provided as history shows—an enduring basis of unity for the different peoples of India. He held the neglect of Sanskrit by the masses, or its denial to them, to be one of the important causes of their degradation. He, therefore, insisted that Sanskrit learning must be acquired by the masses so that they may share the common heritage of Indian culture. He emphasized that the study of Sanskrit is the chief means to level up the culture of the masses to that of the upper classes.

These considerations certainly make a strong case for Sanskrit to be adopted as the

national language of India. If one-fourth of the propaganda that is being made in favour of Hindi or Hindustani is devoted to Sanskrit, it will not be surprising if the country votes Sanskrit for this place of honour. But its only and chief drawback seems to be that it is not a spoken language, and, therefore, we have to fall back upon Hindi or Hindustani. But it is clear that the above arguments in favour of Sanskrit should be taken account of in the selection of a national language, for they point out the necessity of keeping the selected national language of India as close to Sanskrit as possible. The national language should be in the closest harmony with the provincial languages so that the greatest common measure can be achieved between the interprovincial languages on the one hand and between the provincial languages and the national language on the other. It goes without saying that this will mitigate the evil of provincialism, which rests mainly upon a linguistic basis.

### 3. Hindi or Hindustani ?

The field is now left only for Hindi and Hindustani. As we have already observed the literature in Hindi-Hindustani takes either the form of Persianized Urdu or Sanskritized Hindi. Hence there is not considerable literature in Hindustani, and whenever people want to express ideas beyond the ordinary subjects of talk they have necessarily to take recourse to Persian or Sanskrit. Between spoken Hindi and Hindustani, Hindi is understood by a larger number of people (and the proportion has leaped up after the partition), for all the Indian languages, as we have pointed out before, are highly Sanskritic, and for this reason Hindi is more popular than Hindustani. Hindi has already been making attempts to express modern ideas, for the last 46 years, with the help of Sanskrit vocabulary, with considerable success.

Another point of importance is to be noted. Even granting that spoken Hindi and Hindu-

stani are not much different, as it is claimed by some, any one of them can form only the basis of the national language, as they are still undeveloped for scientific, philosophic, and cultural purposes. The question arises, What language are they going to draw upon for their development and to meet the needs of the country ? When we consider that there are already developed provincial languages derived from Sanskrit, or highly influenced by it, that they are drawing upon Sanskrit for their further development, and that they will be the medium of instruction and administration in the areas and provinces they are spoken, it is natural that it will be primarily from Sanskrit that the words will be drawn for various technical and other purposes, for Sanskrit is the common mother or foster-mother to all of them. The West Bengal Government has already done so. The Bengal Government Home (Political) Department has issued a pamphlet containing the first instalment of *Terminology to be used in the Public Services*. In the course of the introduction to the pamphlet the compilers point out that they cannot but depend upon and draw from Sanskrit, and support their contention with cogent reasons. So, whether we adopt Hindi or Hindustani, it is certainly going to be Sanskritized—the time process and sociological and other factors will certainly render it so. Then why fight shy of adopting Hindi straight away as the basis ? It satisfies all these conditions, and it has already a lead, and has been adopted as the provincial language even in the U.P., where Hindustani has the strongest hold and the largest following. Certainly this national language should adopt appropriate words freely, when necessary, from other sources too, just as the English language has done and grown. Persian and other foreign words which have already come into currency among the masses and in administration all over India need not be discarded illogically, or changed or dispensed with save for practical reasons. The adop-

tion of Hindustani will be only in name and will only succeed in confusing issues. What exactly is Hindustani is difficult to know; and it would appear that a lot of useless controversy might have been avoided if we knew the precise meaning of terms. If the national language selected can satisfy the several points raised here, it will matter little whether the basic language is called Hindi or Hindustani. It may as well be called Bharati which is being suggested as an alternative name for Hindi, and this will have a great psychological value also, as toning down violent provincial reactions to Hindi.

#### 4. The Script

Allied to the question of the national language is the question of its script. If, as has been pointed out, the national language is inevitably going to take a Sanskritic turn, the most suited script for this is the Nagari only. The adoption of Persian script as a secondary one (as the Harijan of 28-11-48 suggests) is both unnecessary and unsuited. All the provincial languages are using their own scripts, among which the Persian script finds no place (except for Urdu in case of minorities in certain areas using Urdu). U.P. has adapted Hindi with Nagari script as the provincial language, and East Punjab has also discarded the Persian script. The Muslims (for whom the Persian script is meant) in U.P., C.P., Bihar, Bengal, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, the East Punjab, and Maharashtra, will be learning the Nagari script, or scripts that are very near to it. Then what is the necessity for a secondary script at the centre for the national language? It is quite useless and will be against all reason.

Apart from this, the Persian script is unsuited to represent Sanskrit or any other Indo-Aryan (except Persian and its dependent Urdu) or Indo-European languages. Those who know Sindhi and Punjabi realize how Sanskrit and English words are murdered due to the adoption of that script. It is to be

noted that in Turkey the Roman script was adopted in place of the age-old Arabic script (and Arabic words were removed to purify the Turkish language), and in the Indian Army Roman script was adopted for Urdu. And yet Nagari is more perfect than the Roman script as regards sound and arrangement of the alphabet. With slight variations of accents and shades of sounds it can represent, even in its present form, all the languages of the world. Add to this the difficulty of Persian script for printing, teleprinting, and typing. Based as it is on a different principle, for telegraphic and other communications, where symbols are to be used for alphabets, the two systems cannot be used except with the greatest disadvantage. The law-court proceedings and judgments, inter-provincial communications and governmental publications, university and other all-India institutions' publications, books of all-India importance and other material which are to be published in the national language—will all these be published in both the scripts? It is all only an impossible and fanciful proposition. There will certainly be numerous other difficulties, not yet visualized, which may crop up during the course of such an attempt. It is unprecedented for any country to adopt two scripts for a national language, and it is all the more difficult for a country of India's size and population. Its adoption will entail an unnecessary wastage of time, labour, money, and material, which can be saved by a few lakhs of people learning the Nagari script—after all about 45 letters—which at the most may take a month.

Sentiment and political considerations apart, even for Pakistan where more than 60% of its population speak and write the highly Sanskritic Bengali with a script akin to Nagari, and where in no province Urdu is the spoken language of the masses, from the various considerations referred to during the course of this article, Hindi in Nagari script would have been a suitable state language.

If this be the case with Pakistan, how much more suited then is it to India? If reason is to be thrown overboard and if the progress of the country is to be made difficult and delayed, then we can do no better than adopt Hindustani with two scripts as the national language.

In conclusion we would like to say that it is only the exclusive attachment of the Indian Muslim minority to an extra-territorial culture that vitiates the dispassionate consideration of the whole issue. It is a regrettable thing that, whereas Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and other Muslim countries are taking pride in the ancient cultures of their lands and are trying to discover their roots therein, the Indian Muslims should be looking for inspiration outside, while they are heirs to a rich and hoary culture to which

thinking people from all parts of the world are looking for the solution of world problems and the reconstruction of humanity. It must be remembered that Indian culture has at no time suppressed even the smallest of religious minorities, if not positively helped them, in respect of their religion or culture, to which the Parsis, the Jews, and the Syrian Christians, who have lived and prospered here for nearly 2000 years, bear ample testimony. If the Indian Muslims do not awake in time, they will have to regret later on like Aurangzeb who admonished his teacher of the days of his youth for having wasted his time in teaching him Arabic instead of imparting to him a knowledge of the country and the people of his domicile, etc. (Quoted by Will Durant in *The Story of Civilization*—Vol. I—The Orient.).

## INDIA AND FRANCE

By LOUIS RENOU

From the end of antiquity until modern times, France, like the whole of Europe, lived on certain ideas of India handed down by Greek and Roman writers. Gradually these ideas had resulted in a somewhat fanciful picture of India as the country of marvels, the originator of which had been Ctesias, Artaxerxes' Greek physician.

There was hardly any direct contact of importance until the sixteenth century. A French missionary of the thirteenth century, Jourdain de Severac, may be mentioned. In the seventeenth century we find less shadowy personalities, such as Tavernier, who paid five visits to India, Bernier, who studied customs and habits attentively, and others. Their profuse accounts do not lack references to the civilization and ancient monuments of the country, but none of them made any real contact with what, following the Greeks, we

call 'the wisdom of India'; none of them was in a position to see, even without reading them, religious or profane writings. In the Middle Ages, the Indian fables of the *Panchatantra* were extraordinarily widely known; in oral or written form they found their way into most Western literatures, but they were transmitted first of all in a Pahlavi and, later, in Arabic and Persian versions. The Sanskrit original was still unknown and when, in the seventeenth century, La Fontaine, our greatest fabulist, said that he had drawn many of his fables from those of the Indian sage Bidpai or Pilpay (possibly meaning Vidyapati?), it was in fact an Arabic intermediary, the *Book of Kalilah and Dimnah*, which provided his material; he could have had no suspicion of the existence of a Sanskrit collection.

In the eighteenth century, the mystery

of ancient India came very nearly to being pierced, and the good fortune of the discovery might well have fallen to a Frenchman. In France, the atmosphere was favourable for oriental research. Grouped around the *Encyclopaedia*, an active band of writers and philosophers had resolved to attack the Church's pretensions; they wanted to prove that other peoples had had 'revelations' (*shruti*, as you would say), like the Hebrew-Christian people and at an earlier date; and that those peoples had had religious experience at least as valid as that in which Christians claim a monopoly. The Church on its side sought to defend itself with the same weapons: it wished to prove that the oriental religions were not ancient and that, in any case, they were tainted with idolatry. In short, on both sides, India was, first and foremost, a pretext for religious controversy. Fortunately, the zealous missionaries from Europe sent to southern India were often occupied with more disinterested aims and took a more objective view of matters than that prompted by the general instructions given them. For instance, several French Jesuits of the so-called Maduran Mission in the eighteenth century had a fairly exact knowledge of Sanskrit. Father Pons wrote a Sanskrit grammar in Latin, translated the *Amarakosha*, and sent a considerable consignment of manuscripts to Paris; that was the first collection of Sanskrit writings established in a Western library. Father Coeurdoux was one of the first to recognize the kinship of Sanskrit with our classical languages. The discoveries of these obscure precursors, however, remained unpublished or lost in little-known publications; only a faint echo of them reached Europe; minds were not yet ready to receive the lessons of the East.

Chance, too, favoured a few travellers. The astronomer, Le Gentil, who visited Pondicherry, gained useful information about Indian astronomy from meeting a Tamil scholar, Maridas Poulle. This same scholar,

who had translated into French the *Bagavadam*, a Tamil adaptation of the *Bhagavata Purana*, was also in touch with an historian of Central Asia, De Guignes. Thanks to the passages in the *Bhagavata* dealing with the historical dynasties, the *surya-vamsa* and *soma-vamsa*, De Guignes was able to outline, for the first time, a picture of the ancient history of India. Admittedly, his picture was not free from serious mistakes, but it was difficult to do better with the only available resources. As my friend, Jean Filliozat has shown, an important discovery, with which William Jones is generally credited, was due to De Guignes. As early as 1772, he recognized in the name of Chandragupta Maurya, (which the Tamil text reproduced in the form of Sandragouten), the Sandrakottos mentioned by the Greek historians, the man who had freed India from the dominion of Alexander's successors. As you know, that identification is the keystone of Indian chronology in the earliest periods.

Another traveller, Anquetil-Duperron, set out for India in 1754, at the age of twenty, alone and without an official mission. His object was to rediscover the *Vedas* and the sacred writings of ancient Persia. A firmer and more courageous determination than his has seldom been encountered, but he succeeded in only half of his task; he could not extract from the Brahmins the sacred language, the secret of which they guarded jealously; he could find no means of learning Sanskrit. Failing the *Vedas*, he was able to obtain the Persian translation of the *Upanishads*, of which, fifty years later, he was to publish a Latin version. For long, until the time of Deussen, that version was the fullest, if not the most accurate; as you know, it was through that translation that Schopenhauer came into contact with Indian thought, which decisively influenced his life and work. By that time, however, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the study of Indian language and civilization had already had its



official beginning with the work of Wilkins and Jones.

In France, however, Anquetil's discoveries were overlooked or challenged. 'A prophet is without honour in his own country' as we say. The text of the *Zend-Avesta*, which he had brought back from the Parsee communities in Bombay, was considered to be a forgery. Furthermore, although the authentic manuscripts of the *Veda* had been deposited in the Royal Library (the present *Bibliothèque Nationale*) since 1731, the *Veda* had remained a dead letter in France as everywhere else in the West. Our great writer of the time, Voltaire, who was keenly interested in Indian religion and philosophy, doubted the existence of the *Veda* and was easily duped by a missionary of the time, the author of a fake entitled the *Ézour-Veidam*. He still believed that Sanskrit (*Sanskretan* or *Sanskroutan*, as it was then called by French writers) was a document.

At the time when the study of India began in Europe with Wilkins and Jones and, shortly afterwards, with Colebrooke, it was England which was to derive most advantage from the excellent work of these pioneers, particularly as France, following the unfortunate wars of the eighteenth century, lost almost all her political possessions in India. Nevertheless, from 1800 on, France tended to become the centre for Oriental study. The preparation of an inventory of the Indian manuscripts which were being accumulated in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* was begun. The *Asiatick Researches*, published in Calcutta, were immediately translated into French, as were the works of Wilkins and Jones. The Germans, Klaproth, Lassen (the founder of Indian studies in Germany), the Schlegel brothers, both in different ways students of India, and lastly Bopp, who was to originate the study of comparative grammar, all came to Paris. The *Asiatic Society* of Paris was to be the first established in Europe, some years before London's. The

The first chair of Sanskrit instituted in the West was that at the *Collège de France*; it was first held by Chezy, who learned Sanskrit by himself, evolving a grammar and a dictionary for his own use, and who was to be the first to translate and publish *Shakuntala* in France. The moving account, in the preface to his book, of his difficulties and his reward when he was at last able to decipher the glorious lyrical stanzas of the Indian drama, should be read. In spite of his merits, however, Chezy was only an amateur. A great philologist was needed to establish the study of Sanskrit on a firm footing. Such a philologist was found in Eugene Burnouf, who succeeded Chezy in 1832.

Burnouf's name is less known in France and the world at large than that of Champollion. The interpretation of the writings of ancient India is not so spectacular as the deciphering of hieroglyphics or cuneiform; it is not so definitely the speciality of one man or a small group of men. On reflection, however, it demands still wider and more varied gifts. Burnouf, who was also the true founder of Avestic philology, must be acknowledged as the originator of the scientific study of Buddhism. At the age of only twentytwo, in his *Essai sur le Pali*, written in collaboration with Lassen, he showed that Pali was a language derived from Sanskrit by a strict process of evolution. His *Introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien* is even more important; it may be said to have opened up for us the whole literature of the *Mahayana*; it is still useful for consultation today.

However, Burnouf did not entirely fulfil his destiny. He died at the age of fifty and left behind an extraordinary accumulation of unpublished writings as evidence of the fruitful fields into which his research and teaching were leading him. His classes on the *Veda* had gathered around his Chair the vital forces of contemporary Indian study—from France,

Regnier, who was to be the earliest editor of *Pratishakhyas*; and Barthelemy Saint Hilaire, who in 1855, was to describe the *Sankhya* in detail for the first time. Among Germans, it is enough to mention the names of Roth, Goldstucker, and Max Muller. If Burnouf had lived longer, and had not, from excessive modesty, stood aside in favour of certain of his colleagues or pupils, he would have had the distinction of publishing the *Rigveda*, and possibly of translating it, and would certainly have done it better than the worthy Langlois was able to do. His scrupulously careful philology did not prevent him from appreciating the human grandeur of his mission. In his inaugural lecture, he said: 'It is India, with her philosophy and myths, literature and laws which we shall study in her language. It is more than India, it is a page from the story of the origins of the world, of the primitive history of the human mind, which we shall try to decipher together.' The excellent *Histoire de la litterature hindoustanie* by Garcin de Tassy, also appeared about the same time as Burnouf's works; it is another book which marks an epoch in the literary history of India and, in many respects, is still unsurpassed.

It is difficult today, in our drab world, to imagine the atmosphere of enthusiasm and youthful ardour in which the development of Indian studies proceeded. The scientific interest in India coincided with the Romantic movement and was imbued with the enthusiasm as well as the naivety and excesses of that period. It is not enough to say that it coincided with Romanticism; it was an aspect of it. After the rediscovery of antiquity in the sixteenth century, there followed, as it were, a second Renaissance, the rediscovery of the East. It was thought that the mysterious beginnings of mankind had at last been reached; it was believed that the first halting utterances of the primitive mind were revealed in the earliest writings and earliest speculations. M. Raymond Schwab

rendered a real service to learning in our country in a work, combining charm and erudition, in which he outlines the early stages of Indian studies and the deep influence which they had on French writers in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century.

It is often thought that oriental studies began in Germany, because it was there, we are told, that the ground was best prepared for them. Certainly, it is undeniable that the mystical and sentimental foundation of oriental studies and, in particular, of Indian studies, is more obvious in Germany than elsewhere. It was in Germany that the work of the English scholars immediately found the widest audience, in the first place with Herder and Goethe and later with the Schlegels, Humboldt, Schopenhauer and many others. Romanticism with an Indian bias or romantic Indian studies, as you prefer, awoke memorable echoes there. Although *Shakuntala* was translated into English by William Jones, the reputation of the drama in the West was possibly established less by that translation than by the famous lyric in which Goethe spoke of it; *Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres...* But it is too much to hold, like Winternitz and others, on such a basis, that there is a permanent, inherent affinity between the Indians and the Germanic peoples. The well-known orientalist, Von Schroeder, wrote: 'The Indians are the romanticists of antiquity, the Germans are the romanticists of modern times.' And, as common features, he quoted pantheism, *Weltschmerz*, and the love of nature. But those are features found in all the countries touched by the Romantic movement, in France or Italy just as much as in Germany.

There are not a few writers in France, and often writers of considerable importance, who have expressed sentiments concerning India which reflect that spiritual communion to which the Germans lay claim. What must be admitted is that such French evidence is

usually rather later than that of the Germans, just as the Romantic movement in France developed later than in Germany. The testimony is none the less instructive. The three principal French poets of that period, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Vigny, were interested in different aspects of Indian thought and disturbed by the unknown world that was opening up before them. In all three, the idea of an individual soul informing the universe, the aspiration towards an indefinable divinity, the urge to expression sometimes in the form of a hymn, and sometimes in the epic, are all features connecting them by instinct with ancient India. Hence their wonder when they made acquaintance with the great Sanskrit writings in translation. Several times Vigny describes his emotion, in his *Journal d'un poete* and in his *Letters*. In his *Cours familier de litterature*, Lamartine acknowledges *Shakuntala* as 'a masterpiece of both epic and dramatic poetry, combining in one work the essence of the pastoral charm of the Bible, of the pathos of Aeschylus and tenderness of Racine.' There is justification for the view that Lamartine's poems represented a sort of intuition of the vedic hymns, with which he could not then have been familiar—an exact comparison drawn by Jules Lemaitre, a critic of the end of the century. As for Victor Hugo, he is often full of respect, an even *Panic* respect, before the literary monuments of India, that race of gods and those vast epics, in which he sensed a universe fashioned in his proportions, or rather to his disproportionate immensity. One of the poems of the *Legend of the Ages*, called *Supremacy*, is a free development of the narrative portion of the *Kena Upanishad*. In it we see the gods urging their own best Vayu, Agni, and Indra, to learn the nature of the mysterious power of the *Brahma*. They try, and the *Brahma* tests each in turn, showing them a blade of grass and challenging them to destroy it. The following is the passage relating to Agni in the simple terms

of the Sanskrit original: *tad abhyadravat/tam/abhyavadatko 'sity/agnir va aham asmity abravit/jataveda va aham asmity/ tasmims tvayi kam viryam ity/apidam sarvam daheyam yad idam prithivyam iti/tasmai trinam nidadhau/etad daheti/tad upapreyaya sarvajavena/tan na shashaka dagdhum...* This is what the passage becomes in Hugo's colourful and somewhat grandiloquent version: Le dieu rouge, Agni, que l'eau redoute, Et devant qui medite a genoux le bouddha, Alla vers la clarte sereine et demanda :—Qu'es-tu clarte ?—Qu'es-tu toi-meme ? lue ditelle. —Le dieu du Feu. —Quelle est ta puissance ? —Elle est telle Que, si je veus, je puis bruler le noirci Les mondes, les soleils et tout. —Brule ceci, Dit la clarte, montrant au dieu le brin de paille. Alors, comme un belier defence une muraille Agni, frappant du pied, fit jaillir de partout La flamme formidable, et, fauve, ardent, debout, Crachant des jet de lave entre ses dents de braise, fit sur l'humble crouler une fournaise ; Un soufflement de forge emplit le firmament ;<sup>1</sup>

The great historian of the Romantic period, Michelet, no less poetical than these poets, in 1863 came upon the *Ramayana* in Fauche's mediocre translation. In this connexion he wrote, in his fine book *La Bible de l'humanite* : 'That year will always remain a dear and cherished memory ; it was the first time I had the opportunity to read the great sacred poem of India, the divine *Ramayana*. If

<sup>1</sup> The red god Agni, the dreaded of water, before whom Buddha, kneeling, meditates, approached the serene radiance and asked 'What art thou, radiance ?' 'What art thou ?' was the reply. 'The God of Fire.' 'What power is thine ?' 'It is such that, if I will, I can burn the sky to blackness, burn worlds, and suns, burn all.' 'Burn this' said the radiance, showing the god a wisp of straw. Then, as a ram will batter down a wall, Agni beat his foot and all around struck forth the dreadful flame ; he stood in glowing tawny light, spewing through burning teeth great lava streams, and poured a furnace flame upon the puny straw ; the heavens were filled with a great forge's roar.

anyone has lost the freshness of emotion, let him revive it in the *Ramayana*, let him drink a long draught of life and youth from that deep chalice.' Again, in his book on *La femme*, with all its brilliant immaturities, Michelet advises a young woman who has just learned the joys of love to have *Shakuntala* read to her (there is no doubt that that play was held in high esteem). 'I leave her fortunate lover the delight of reciting *Shakuntala* to her in some flowery bower' he says, and he thinks it possible to sum up the essence of Indian thought, the *satyasya satyam*, in a short phrase, an *upanishad*: 'The Veda of Vedas, the secret of India is this—man is the eldest of the gods; the word created the world.'

Blazac, the great novelist of the same period, introducing one of his favourite characters, Louis Lambert, in the novel of the same name, makes him say this: 'It is impossible to call in doubt the fact that the Asiatic scriptures were anterior to our Holy Scriptures. Anthropogony drawn from the Bible is only the genealogy of one swarm from the human hive which found a resting place between the mountains of the Himalayas and those of the Caucasus. The sight of the swift regeneration of the earth, the miraculous power of the sun, first witnessed by the Hindus, suggested to them the gracious conceptions of happy love, fire worship, and the infinite personifications of reproductive forces. Those magnificent images are not found in the writings of the Hebrews.' Victor Cousin, a philosopher who was widely celebrated at the time, made it his duty to assist the dissemination of Indian philosophy so far as he could; and the famous physicist, Ampere, wrote to Hugo: 'Indian philosophy will occupy the attention of our century and those following, as much as Greek philosophy occupied the sixteenth century.'

This enthusiasm, which naturally was not free from misunderstandings and ingenuousness, was to endure for most of the nineteenth

century, taking the most varied forms. At the beginning of the century it was mystical with Ballanche, who, in his *Essai sur les institutions sociales*, demanded that Latin should be replaced in primary education by the oriental languages. In his *Genie des religions* Edgar Quinet, half-historian half-mystic, wrote: 'When human revolutions first began, India stood more expressly than any other country for what may be called a declaration of the Rights of the Being. That divine Individuality, and its community with infinity, is obviously the foundation and the source of all life and all history.' In his *Discours sur les revolutions de la surface du globe*, the naturalist, Cuvier, uses more scientific terms in his attempt to demonstrate the support found in the ancient writings of India for hypotheses regarding the nature of primitive man and the antiquity of human habits. Later on, Gobineau made a scientific claim when, in his *Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines*, he attempted to restore the concept of a pure Aryan race, for which purpose he naturally employed the testimony of the Indians of the vedic age. We know only too well what tragic impetus Gobineau's doctrines gave to German racialism.

To understand the causes of that enthusiasm, it is first of all necessary to remember that in a short space of time, scarcely more than a few decades, a series of most important Sanskrit works were introduced into France in translations: firstly, there was the complete *Rigveda* translated by Langlois (completed only very shortly after the beginning of Wilson's translation); the *Ramayana* translated by Fauche; most of the *Mahabharata*, also translated by Fauche, who was likewise responsible for the whole of the *Kalidasa* and several other literary texts; the *Laus of Manu* translated by Loiseleur-Deslongchamps, not to mention the *Saddharmapundarika* and the *Bhagavata Purana* translated by Burnouf. With the exception of the three last mentioned, these translations are very indifferent; they

are what used to be called, like certain ladies, 'pretty but unfaithful'. With all their faults, however, they had a stimulating influence and, taken together, they form a much more substantial body than the contributions added by later generations.

At that time there was constant contact between writers, artists, and men of science. Learning had not yet assumed that sometimes frightening aspect which today too often discourages the non-specialist. Any cultivated reader could profitably follow the work of scientists. The Duc d'Orleans, Louis Philippe, later to be king of France, was the President of the *Societe Asiatique* and gave lectures on the value of oriental studies. In the literary salons the best brains met; we may mention Mme Cuvier's salon, frequented by Burnouf, and that of Mary Clarke, the wife of Jules Mohl, who, for years, was to be the Secretary of the *Societe Asiatique*. Rammohun Roy's visit to Paris, in 1832, roused intense sympathetic curiosity.

Gradually, however, excitement subsided. The advances of science made the public distrustful. France's growing disquiet at the German threat unjustly created a certain distaste for the Orient, of which Germany had been the herald.

However, the decline in enthusiasm was offset by a truer understanding. Towards the end of the century, the religious historian, Renan, reviewed calmly and justly the progress made over a long period. He defended the primacy of the Bible and affirmed that oriental literature could be appreciated only by scholars; he criticized the alleged resemblances between the legend of Buddha and the life of Jesus. In another passage, however (perhaps a remnant of Romanticism), recalling Burnouf's teaching—for Renan too had been one of his pupils—he said of the writings of ancient India: 'There is not one of those works in which I have not found more philosophic elements than in all the

writings of Descartes and his school.'

One poet carries on from another. Leconte de Lisle, a belated Romantic, was to compose a vedic prayer for the dead and a poem to Surya. It was a survival of Lamartine, inspired not so much by deep feeling as by a taste for the exotic. Exoticism, continually nourished by travellers' tales and popular literature, now tended to take the place in writers of the concern with spiritual things which had inspired the Romantics. Mallarme, a poet of the end of the century, and highly reputed, wrote Indian fables in which he adapted in his own way stories which had already been translated from Sanskrit into French; for instance, he gave an abbreviated version of the story of *Nala and Damayanti*, adorned with precious conceits and embellishments of style to give it what he believed to be an oriental atmosphere.

Pierre Loti, another descendant of Romanticism, was to write travel books on India under the title of *L'Inde sans les Anglais*. There is a fair proportion of the morbidly picturesque in that work, but there is also, here and there, a note which may be sincere, as when he says: 'It is to India, the cradle of human thought and prayer, that I go to ask peace from the guardians of Aryan thought; I beg them to give me belief in an indefinite survival of the soul.' Another poet Jean Lahor, who was steeped in Indian pessimism and, as it were, intoxicated by the idea of *nirvana* wrote an *Histoire de la litterature hindoue* with, it must be admitted, more lyrical feeling than competence. More recently, another poet, Maurice Magre, like many others, has fallen under the spell of Buddhism spiced with an admixture of theosophy. More impressive is the admiration inspired in Rodin by the discovery of the temples of pre-Muslim India.\*

(To be continued)

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# SHELLEY AND VEDANTA

By P. K. ANANTANARAYAN

The very title of this essay is likely to cause a shock of surprise to the mind of the general reader. But to the student of English literature, and especially to those few who take a special interest in Shelley's poetry, which is indissolubly linked up with his life and character, the subject offers a tempting and fertile field of study and investigation, yielding both pleasure and profit. And as the fruit of my long and devoted labours, it shall be my endeavour to show that there is remarkable resemblance between Vedanta and the philosophy which underlies the poetry of Shelley.

There is a common belief among Englishmen, and even among some continental writers, that Shelley was an atheist. The fact that he wrote and distributed a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism* during his student life, for which he was expelled from the University, lends colour to such a notion. It is also true his religious faith passed through three progressive stages, from materialism to nihilism and finally to Platonism. He had a bitter hatred of superstition and a gloomy religion, which had been used as an instrument of oppression by kings and priests for many centuries in Europe and America. We can definitely state that Shelley believed in a creed, which seemed to have no God because it was all God; and he might be called an agnostic only in the sense that 'he proclaimed the impossibility of solving the insoluble and knowing the unknowable.'

It is a fact that he was not a believer in conventional Christianity, as it is preached and practised by its adherents. He was convinced of the need for a religion of humanity, i.e. a religion which will elevate and ennoble humanity, and which, unlike Christianity, should permeate and regulate the whole

organization of man's life. Realizing that organized religion has tended to become a source of tyranny, because it insists upon unquestioning belief in certain set doctrines and dogmas, he states, 'A truly divine religion might yet be established, if charity were really made the principle, instead of faith.' In spite of his lack of faith in Christianity, he had a sincere admiration for the person and character of Jesus and appreciated the true significance of his high ethical teachings. As Leigh Hunt remarks, 'His want of faith in the letter, and his exceeding faith in the spirit of Christianity, formed a comment one on the other'.

Shelley's life and character equally reveal that he was a truly spiritual soul. All through his life felt an insatiable craving after the highest ideals, moral and spiritual. His soul was compact of human faith and love, and pure and intense aspiration marks the first note of his authentic poetry. He was essentially a child at heart and retained the simplicity and innocence of childhood to the last, even while his genius expanded and matured. With him, genuine poet that he was, a religion of Beauty was a passion and a power. Though his poetry may not sing directly of God or religion, it gives glory to God by singing of Love, Beauty, and Truth.

Another fact about Shelley is that he was a rebel and a revolutionary in his behaviour and actions. The French Revolution shook his mind and soul to its very depths. His ethical principles were fundamentally different from those of contemporary society. He waged an incessant fight with governments, priests, and religion, for he felt convinced that the tyranny exercised by the State, Church, and society was mainly responsible for keeping man from growth into perfect happiness, and

he paid a severe penalty for it. Expelled from the University, turned out of an unsympathetic home, ostracized and persecuted by the society, Shelley, like the fiery Byron, had to flee from England and spend the last years of his too brief life as an exile in Italy. Being a violent reformer, he challenged the old order and sought to overthrow established institutions and traditions and build up a new world of universal happiness, which was his goal. Like his *Skylark*, he soared from society into a heaven far remote, the ideal realm of his fancy and imagination.

'Shelley is a unique personality, a poet of poets, a supreme idealist, a child of dreams, a lover of nature and an enthusiast of humanity.' Idealism is the key to his character and furnishes an explanation of his revolutionary spirit and the secret of his life and inspiration of his poetic genius. His imagination loved to hover in an ethereal sphere, in a world of dreams, yet it was not without actual contact with life. His moral nature was highly developed and his perception of right and wrong was very acute. A man passionate for truth, seized with a kind of divine madness, he was obedient to the right as he conceived it and was ready to sacrifice everything to maintain it. Love was the root and basis of his nature, which became an all-embracing devotion to his fellowmen. Two fixed principles moulded his life and actions : a strong, irrepressible love of liberty and an equally ardent love of toleration of all opinions, especially religious opinions. 'In fact he was the greatest, purest, bravest, and most spiritual being, and most lovable of men.' And it is highly tragic to reflect that while his genius was becoming gradually riper, wiser, and truer to his highest instincts, his 'miracle of thirty years' should have been cut off by a cruel fate.

Just as Shelley's character and ideals find full expression in his poems, so also there is perfect fusion of poetry and philosophy in his works. He is a born poet-philosopher, and

philosophy is more inextricably blended with his poetry than in the case of Wordsworth, Browning, or Tennyson. He gave himself up to inspiration and emotion so that his poetry might be the language of his soul. Though there may be no reasoned system on the theory of human life and its problems, his metaphysic is not only a clear expression of his intense poetic vision but supplements the principles of his democratic creed. The Poet Shelley was a true preacher of the religion of Heavenly Beauty, and 'he discovered through the Lamp of Beauty the Light of God.' The permanent interest and increasing influence of his poetry is mainly due to the philosophy interwoven into it. Shelley's wide intellectual interest and metaphysical interpretations of Love and Beauty, living and working in the universe, make a strong appeal to serious and reflective minds and to lovers of great poetry.

Shelley was by nature of a speculative bent of mind, and his keen philosophic grasp was stimulated by the study of Plato and Spinoza. We learn from his biography that he was not a theoretical armchair philosopher but that his soul was impelled by a burning impulse to realize the Infinite, and that his realization of truth in moods of ecstasy took him out of the bounds of the flesh into the regions of the Beyond. His speculations and intuitions somehow led him in the same direction as the oriental mystics. In his view, 'Religion is the perception of the relations in which we stand to the Principle of the Universe.' His religion was transcendental rather than positive, and he had abiding faith in the reality of a world of spirit behind the world of sense. Again, according to Shelley, 'Poets are not only legislators and inventors of the arts of life but teachers who bring men into close touch with truths expressed in religion, and poetry redeems from decay the visitations of Divinity in Man.' Is it any wonder, then, that Shelley, holding such revolutionary views on poetry and religion, should become the medium through whom

the spirit of the East manifested itself to the materialistic West in the early years of the 19th century? In this article I shall attempt to show, chiefly by means of quotations from Shelley's poetry, how there is a striking similarity between the teachings of Vedanta, especially as expounded by the Advaitic school, and the moral and spiritual ideas and reflections which inspired this young poet and prophet.

### I. A PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

The human race, from primitive man to the most civilized and advanced peoples, has always been struck by the grandeur and mystery of the universe. The external world, with its boundless expanse in space, is beautiful and grand, sublime and awe-inspiring. What are we? What is this Universe and how does it work? Such questions have been asked by mankind from its very infancy.

The limitless range and the immense proportions of the Universe, presided over by the Supreme Being, is described by Shelley in these lines:

'Look on that which cannot change—  
the One,

The unborn and the undying; Earth  
and Ocean,  
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem  
The sapphire floods of interstellar air.

This firmament pavilioned upon chaos  
With all its cressets of immortal fire' etc.

—(*Hellas*)

And again,

'Spirit of Nature! here

In this interminable wilderness

Of worlds, at whose immensity

Even soaring fancy staggers,

Here is thy fitting temple!—(*Daemon I*)

### II. THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

It has already been remarked that Shelley was not an atheist. In the note to one of his poems he clearly states, 'The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being is spoken against, and not the Supreme Being itself.' Though the

word 'God' is very rarely used by him in his poems, we often meet with expressions like 'Universal Soul' and 'Universal Mind' 'Spirit of Nature,' and 'Unseen Power.' and 'Awful Loveliness.' Believing in the moral efficacy of true faith, he speaks of 'the rites of a religion sweet whose God was in her heart and brain.'

Shelley's conception of God approximates to the vedantic ideal, especially of the *Advaitic* doctrine of *Brahman*, e.g. in *Adonais*, he refers to the eternal and unchanging nature of the Supreme Being as contrasted with the fleeting and evanescent character of material objects in the following manner:

'The One remains, the many change  
and pass.

Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's  
shadows fly.'

The immanence and omnipresence of God in Nature is brought out in this statement:

'Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel  
everywhere,

From Heaven and Earth, and all that in  
them are,

Veiled art thou, like a... star.'

—(*Zucca III. 8*).

Again, in another context, which relates to the intimate relation that subsists between the omnipotent nature of God and the perishable material universe, in which it moves and works, he speaks of:

'That Power

Which wields the world with never-  
wearied love,

Sustains it from beneath and kindles  
it above.'

The divine nature of the soul of man, and its being a manifestation of the Supreme Being, is referred to in the statement:

'That Power which is the glass

Wherein man his nature sees.'

In addition to his faith in the Absolute, both transcendent and immanent, he speaks also of the 'Mother of this unfathomable world', the Mother Spirit which works in the



world to protect and guide and elevate the mind for its own regeneration. This attitude is quite alien to the spirit of the Christian religion, which believes only in the Fatherhood of God. The idea that God is Eternal, that nature and the souls become manifested and change, but God remains the same unchangeable Being, often occurs in his poems. In fact, we repeatedly hear the echo of the truth that God is the cause, the universe is the effect, or it is God Himself.

### III. THE LIFE OF NATURE

Compared with other English poets, who are also great lovers of Nature, Shelley is the only one who regarded external Nature as permeated and interpenetrated by a spiritual life which animated all things, and natural objects as symbols of divine truth. According to the vedantic doctrine, the various forms of cosmic energy, like matter and force, thought and intelligence, are all projection or manifestation of the Cosmic Intelligence or Supreme Lord.

It was a cardinal point of Shelley's faith that, vast and wonderful as the material universe is, it borrows its greatness and glory from what is spiritual. The unity underlying Nature is expressed in his address, 'Earth, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood.' In one poem he speaks of the earth as a Mother, every pore of her granite mass is interpenetrated with love. The idea that the Spirit of God permeates and vitalizes all varieties of natural objects finds glowing expression in *Zucca V*.

In winds, and trees, and streams, and  
all things common,

In music and the sweet unconscious tone  
Of animals, and voices which are human...

I the most

Adore Thee present or lament Thee lost.'

In another picturesque stanza Shelley boldly declares his belief in a world-soul in a manner which might shock the average Western reader, but which is in perfect consonance with the vedantic teaching, regarding Brahman :

'Yet not the lightest leaf  
That quivers to the passing breeze  
Is less instinct with Thee,—  
Yet not the meanest worm,  
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead  
Less shares Thy eternal breath.'

—(*Daemon I. 182*)

It was a part of his innate faith that in the lowest worm as well as the highest human beings the same divine nature is present, that the same divinity animates everything. Western critics might call it pantheism, but it is part and parcel of the teachings of Vedanta. In his immortal elegy *Adonais*, which mourns the premature death of his brother poet Keats, he further elaborates the idea of how the Universal Intelligence, in its various aspects, moulds the active life of all beings and manifests itself in different degrees through them :

That Light whose smile kindles the  
Universe.

That Beauty in which all things work  
and move.

That Benediction which the eclipsing curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining

Love,

Which through the web of being blindly  
wove

By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst.'

According to vedantic cosmology, 'nothing can be created out of nothing, everything exists through eternity; the whole evolution beginning with the lowest manifestation of life reaching up to the highest, the most perfect man, must have been the involution of something else; that Universal Intelligence must be the Lord of Creation.' Shelley, too, believed in a similar Theory of Evolution, in which the One Spirit, in the exercise of its formative and animating function, constitutes the life of Nature from the lowest to the highest form and gradually leads to their progress and the working out of their destiny :



'One Mind.' The same idea of the Unity of Man in his spiritual essence is brought out in the lines :

'Man, one harmonious Soul of many a soul,  
Whose nature is its own divine control,  
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to  
the sea.'—(*Prometheus IV*)

Having considered the nature of the Soul, we shall now devote some thought to its relation to God, as understood by Shelley and propounded in some passages in *Adonais*. He believed in a Universal Soul, in which and from which all individual souls are born, and to which they are gathered up at death. The Soul is the sustainer of the Universe visiting all things with refreshment and joy, being itself the principle of life in all things. Two vedantic similes are commonly employed to illustrate this relationship. Just as the waves of the sea, which are of the same substance as the ocean, rise from the surface and after a brief existence, merge in the sea again ; and just as the sparks coming out of the fire shine for a moment and vanish out of sight ; so also the individual *Atman* emerges from the *Paramatman*, and after a brief mundane existence, goes back to the original Fountain of Life.

In *Adonais*, while speaking of the soul of Keats after his death, we are told that :

'The pure spirit shall flow

Back to burning fountain whence it came ;'  
and

'His presence is felt wherever that Power  
may move  
Which has withdrawn his being to its own.'

Another important doctrine, about which Shelley held very strong views, is the Immortality of the Soul. That the soul is immortal, having neither beginning nor end is emphatically stated in the *Bhagavad Gita* ; 'Never did I not exist, nor you, nor will any of us cease to be.' In one of his ethical essays the poet argues that 'the inextinguishable thirst for immortality is itself a stronger argument that eternity is the inheritance of

every thinking being.' He believed that a human soul is a portion of the Universal Soul, though it is subjected during its connection with the body to all the illusions and dreams of sense. 'But the Nature of *Brahman* is as little changed by these limitations as is the clearness of the crystal by the colours which it reflects, or as is the sun by the moving reflections of itself in the water.' After the death of the body, it continues to be a portion of the Universal Soul, liberated from those illusions, and subsisting in some condition, either of personal consciousness or of absorption. We have already referred to the immortality of Keats' spirit as a vital immaterial essence surviving the death of the body. In this respect Shelley seems to waver between two standpoints, in one of which the spirit is said, 'to flow back to the burning fountain whence it came.' In another stanza we are told that when the soul of Keats goes to heaven, it is warmly welcomed by the spirits of some other young poets, 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown !' This shows that the departed soul is regarded as still a living spiritual personality sharing the heavenly life with the other illustrious dead. Thus we conclude that according to Shelley's firm faith, the human soul, being eternal, is in its very nature perfect and man has to regain that original purity. Though its lustre may be somewhat dimmed during its passage through earthly life, its pristine purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God, i.e. finally realizing in his soul that he is God Himself.

#### V. THE QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH

The question of Life and Death has intrigued the mind of man ever since the dawn of civilization, and our vedic sages and the *rishis* of the *Upanishads* have devoted their best thoughts to probe this secret and unravel this mystery. Like those inquiring souls, Shelley also had in an unequalled measure the insatiable craving after the highest truth. Many of the statements made by him on

different occasions clearly demonstrate that this problem also agitated his mind. In answer to the query. 'What will befall this inestimable spirit when we appear to die?' he answered, 'I am content to see no farther than Plato and Bacon. My mind is tranquil; I have no fears and some hopes. In our present gross material state our faculties are clouded; when Death removes our clay coverings, the mystery will be solved.' The idea of 'death as a revealer' was constantly present before his mind. His remark on another occasion: 'We know nothing; we have no evidence; we cannot express our inmost thoughts; they are incomprehensible even to ourselves,' emphasizes not only the innate difficulty of the problem but his humility and realization of the shortcomings of our intellect.

In stating that 'he has awakened from the dream of life,' he explicitly hints that life is no more than a dream, and when a man dies, he is awakened from the dream, and he is no longer asleep but really awake. In another context he speaks of life as a 'painted veil', thereby bringing out the unreality of earthly existence, which obscures and disguises the immortal spirit; and it is only when the veil is lifted at death we are left face to face with the real scene. Man has a spirit within him that is at enmity with nothingness and dissolution. Though the body may perish, 'for Love, Beauty and delight, there is no death nor change.' With the Platonists Shelley held the view that death is merely the separation of soul and body; the body hinders thought, and the mind attains to truth only by retiring into itself, and overcoming worldly desires. We should therefore welcome the release of the soul.

What is Shelley's idea of Death? Did

he believe in the survival of the soul after death? We have already referred to the poet's firm faith in the immortality of the soul. To bring out the comparison that he institutes between the states of death and sleep, here are a few quotations:

'How wonderful is Death,

Death and his brother Sleep !

—(*Daemon I.*)

Again,

'Death is the veil which those who live  
call life,

They sleep, and it is lifted.'

—(*Prometheus III*)

In answer to the question, 'Cease they to love and move, and breathe and speak, who die?' in the concluding portion of *The Sensitive Plant*, we read:

'It is a modest creed, and yet

Pleasant if one considers it,

To own that death itself must be,

Like all the rest a mockery.'

The passages quoted establish the fact that for Shelley the soul is not material, having neither form nor shape, and it is omnipresent. The mind is limited and cannot go beyond it. What we know as Time, Space, and Causation are in the mind; and as the soul is beyond these three factors, it is free and infinite. There is no question of birth and death as regards the soul. In a well-known passage in *Adonais*, he compares human life to the prismatic hues thrown on a pavement from a dome of stained glass until it is broken up into fragments by death. At the same time, he asserts that the pristine purity and divinity of the soul is dimmed only temporarily during its connection with the physical frame and that it will regain its 'white radiance' on its deliverance from the bondage of the flesh.

(*To be continued*)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

This issue begins with more *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* written to Miss Josephine MacLeod. ....

The Editorial entitled *The Western Question* is the first of a series on the subject dealing with the problem of national integration in the wide perspective of our past as well as that of the human situation in general.

### REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE QUESTION

In his address at the special convocation of the Osmania University of Hyderabad on 26 December 1948, Pandit Nehru, our Prime Minister, is reported by the *Hindustan Times* of 28 December 1948 to have referred to the national language controversy in the country in the following way :

'People who know nothing about the language' he observed, 'are exciting controversy over this issue. People talk about it as if a national language can be laid down by the State. In the political arena, it is impossible to consider the question dispassionately. Those who are advocating the use of unalloyed Hindi or Urdu words are doing so out of sheer ignorance. A language must be vigorous, and must grow. It must absorb as many words as it can take. For a language to become rich, its door must be kept wide open.

'The national language should be the language spoken by the masses. Court language or the language in high society had beauty but no vigour of life. We must have the language spoken by the largest number of people.'

Pandit Nehru instanced the case of English and said the way that language grew was worthy of notice. English today was one of the most powerful languages of the world. It might not be as graceful as many other languages, but, it had some vigour. The reason for this vigour was that there had been 'progressive assimilation by the language which was now becoming more and more American. Americanism or Australianism or Canadianism put a great deal of vigour in the English language.

Pandit Nehru believed that several thousands of new words were being added to English every year, many of them technical. Therefore to argue about Urdu and Hindi and think in terms of static condition was not correct. Any language that shut its doors and refused assimilation was indicating a sure sign of deterioration.

The mind of India, Pandit Nehru said, must be open, if the country desired to remain a great nation and anybody who wanted to limit the language was only trying to kill it.

'A language becomes an attractive vehicle of thought when it combines crudities of the common man which make it more dynamic in expression ; Kamal Pasha gave Turkey a language after incorporating in it 10,000 words culled from Turkish villages. The national language will emerge from the masses and not from classes.'

The above report sets up in our mind a train of thoughts, part of which we are putting into print, for the language question is of vital importance and requires to be considered, above all, in a perspective wider than the political. We shall touch on points which are cognate and which will help to put the question in such a perspective.

Politics, in fact, is a question of balancing conflicting social forces ; it is an expression of a struggle for power of different groups or peoples in a society. It generally works by a series of compromises. And for this reason as Panditji says, politics is no arena where the language question can be justly solved. Nor for the matter of that is politics competent to deal with any question of culture. Panditji has set right limits to politics, and it will be well if politicians remember this. However. . .

We are not aware of any important person who has pleaded for the adoption of a national language that is stabilized and fixed for eternity. On the contrary it is obvious to all who have given any thought to the matter that the proposed language will be no more than a tender sapling which will proliferate by drawing nourishment freely and abundantly from all possible sources. It is also clearly and widely recognized that the language must be clear and simple, yet precise and dignified, and one that can be easily learnt by the vast masses of the Indian people. The start, therefore, has to be made with a language that is most widely spoken and

understood and which reflects the common mentality of our people and the universal spirit of our culture. In short it must be our own and be closest to all the provincial languages. The cultural background of India extending for thousands of years and giving unity to our people cannot be shaken off by political dusters.

It is further a truism to say that languages have their own laws of growth and do not obey the fiat of political powers. Politics does not create a language, nor can sustain one in the long run against the real forces of culture and truth. Yet, there are occasions when the State feels compelled to lay down a language for its purposes. For example, the English language was imposed upon India by the British. We took it up. Of its benefits there is no doubt; the Western science and technique and intellectual attainments have come to us *via* English, though this was hardly the object of its introduction. But the drawbacks and disasters which such a course has inevitably entailed are not so apparent. Science and technique could have come quicker and to a wider people through an Indian language. This course was pleaded in Bengal when decision for the medium of higher instruction in the country was taken. But it was then turned down, for many regarded the idea as preposterous. But the Bengali language developed in spite of it and gained world-wide recognition through Tagore.

Similarly Persian was thrust upon parts of India under Muslim rule. The people had to accept it. In fact they came to wield it better than the ruling class and added fresh beauty, dignity, and depth to an alien tongue from their own spiritual resources. Panditji himself states in the end that Kamal Pasha, backed by military and political power, laid down the language of New Turkey. And what the Dictator did is significant. He threw overboard the antiquated and complicated Arabic alphabet and Arabic words—

the latter as much as possible. The Ataturk liberated the Turks from what he considered the bondage of an alien culture. He felt that the Turks would not grow into a nation in the Western political, or if you like, modern, sense of the term unless his people completely broke away from the religious and cultural tradition of Islam. The example of Kamal cited by Panditji suggests to us conclusions which are perhaps antithetical to those intended by him. If the Turks, inspired by nationalism, gave up a thing that did not originally belong to them as a people, but which they themselves had continued to accept and revere for centuries (in fact the Turks for hundreds of years formed the vanguard of militant Islam battering down the ramparts of other civilizations in distant corners of Asia and Europe), why cannot others, similarly and with far more weighty reasons, jettison everything that does not really belong to their soil but has been imposed upon them by naked force? Yet, nobody has even suggested this.

The root idea of Kamal was national. Imposition is not assimilation, nor is imitation creative. We have to stand on our legs before we can open our arms wide to all whom we want to abandon themselves to our embrace. It will be the blackest of shames for Indians who have enough in their soil and air to give nourishment to the plant of Indian national language to cling to redundant alien elements. We need, however, brave politics—politics that will base itself on the essential and true factors of life and boldly challenge prejudice and superstition from whatever quarters they may raise their heads.

Or take the very case of Hyderabad. Here, in a country where nearly the entire population speaks Telugu, Kanarese, Marathi, and Tamil, the State thrust upon educational and governmental institutions a bombastic *Urdu* which is as unfamiliar to the people as English. We do not know if the point was seen or consciously intended, or that it went

home to those responsible for this enormity.

We cannot write at great length on the subject here; nor is it necessary, for we believe abundant reasons are already available for making the only rational decision. Still certain things require to be brought to the fore. Very soon the existing political authority will be required to make a decision, for the matter cannot brook delay. The State requires a language of its own. The decision has to be made in accordance with the desires of the people and the needs of the country, and it must also be in consonance with the real dynamic factors of history and culture. Political considerations of an ephemeral nature must not be thrown into the scale. Politics is a flotsam on the eddying surface of the stream of life. It does not make a nation. It is the reflection of the deeper and slower and impalpable and imponderable tides that make history. A politics which cuts itself adrift from its cultural soil becomes self-sufficient and destructive of society. Politics must always look to a conception superior to it in order that it may not degenerate into a pursuit of power or self-aggrandizement. A world in which politics dictates attitude towards life, a world where *danda* lays down *dharma*, has indeed sunk low and seems near its end....

We can again make a fetish of simplicity. The national language will be a State language and will not replace the provincial tongues or literatures. The State language will be required—in the first instance for administrative, legal, and technical needs. Precision will be a great consideration, and this cannot often be found in popular words. We shall have to introduce thousands of new words with definite and unambiguous meanings to answer the technical needs of the State language. At first, obviously enough, they will be unfamiliar to nearly all of us. But in a short time they will become well known and will be suitably shaped and changed by the dynamic factors of development. We cannot

have, right from the start a State language that will be level with the understanding of the common man. It may even be a little unfamiliar to fairly educated persons also. It cannot be helped. To ask for anything else is to ask for the impossible.

The State language will replace English gradually. How many Indians are there who can speak and write in English with ease? How widely is it known? But the State language, if it be Sanskritic, will be, even at its start, better understood by more Indians. And they will use it to far better effect. But we must also say that it will be extremely harmful to give up English altogether and at once for sentimental reasons alone, as far as we can see English will require to be studied by many in order to keep the windows of our mind open to fresh ideas from the West.

We shall have a better understanding of the problem if we look at it in another light. The example of Bengali is full of meaning. Bengali, as every educated person may know, is the most elegant, developed, and vigorous of all the provincial languages of India. It has been gradually fashioned into the picturesque and graceful, yet popular, medium of expression that it is today by an illustrious line of writers who drew almost exclusively from Sanskrit. The writers knew both Sanskrit and English, for the language in its present shape began its career after the coming of the British. They found that they could express any idea, eastern or western, in Bengali with the help of words drawn from Sanskrit. This link with Sanskrit has made the Bengali language great, and it further has been one of the main reasons why the national idea in our time first found vigorous expression through Bengali. In spite of political disadvantages it has grown naturally into a simple language from what might have been regarded then as an artificial and pedantic form. Its influence on the other provincial languages of India is deep and has to be traced to its connection with Sanskrit. This

1949

fact made it easy for the other Indian writers to understand its style or be influenced by it. They found in it a cultural climate suitable for the growth of their own literature. Bengali has shown the way. It has proved beyond all doubt and disputation that Sanskrit can easily be shaped into one of the most elegant, dynamic, and expressive languages of the world. If this fact has been demonstrated under adverse political and economic conditions, in spite of agitation, poverty, and malnutrition, can we have any doubt as to the future of Sanskritic languages in a free and prosperous India? To judge the language question aright a perspective is essential.

Consider again this matter. The two national songs of India have been given by Bengal. Why? Because Bengal got her ideas and words from Sanskrit. And it is this reason why *Vande Mataram* and *Janayana* find responses in Indian hearts in East or West, South or North. The words touch the deep chords of our life which remain and will remain unstruck otherwise. They touch off something in your blood which begins forthwith to rush madly through your veins. Can you say the same thing about the song that sings of *Jehan*, *bulbul*, and *gulistan*? They are alien and take you to a very different atmosphere—may be pleasant but light and without strength or vigour. They touch other chords that lie on the surface of life. Compared to what these Sanskrit songs give us, it is superficial. They are as different from one another as the majestic and sonorous drum-beat is from the tinkling of brass cymbals. We do not say, however, that brass cymbals have no place in the national music.

In a democracy we have to humour the masses, and precisely by doing this we can do them incalculable mischief. When we talk of popular things, do we really mean that everything should be made level with present understanding and feeling of the masses—art, literature, religion etc.? This is not help but a sop. Our efforts should be to evoke

gradually and by stages, by means of plain and simple expressions, the deep beauties and refinements of thought and feeling which now sleep in their hearts. We never put into other people's heads anything that is not there. We simply rouse by suggestion the sleeping powers and beauties of the Self. That is our aim and not to drag down everything to a low level. The salacious literature and art of today are undoing the results of the civilizing process of millennia. No wonder the masses of today are ruled by furious and uncontrollable passions. It is not merely hunger.

The development of the modern Indian languages, particularly in the North, whose beginnings go back to the preachings and writings of saints in the middle ages was interrupted by political factors, first under Muslim reactionary rule and later under the British. We are not oblivious of the services rendered to the popular languages under a few nationalized and enlightened Muslim rulers in certain areas or by the Christian missionaries. But the difficulties that came to be put in the way of such development by political factors far outweigh the help rendered. If you read Indian history with care you will discover that our popular languages really arose as a response (one aspect of course, of the total response) to the challenge of alien cultures. Now the time has come when this development can proceed along the line dictated by the objective factors of history and culture. Let no considerations of short-sighted politics interfere with it. To refuse to recognize a legitimate aspiration is to drive it into the arena of blind emotion. The fury will sweep everything away on its tide.

In dealing with the question of the national language one cannot but be aware of a veiled antagonism in certain quarters to Sanskrit and the culture it represents. This is born of sheer ignorance and short-sightedness. It is the result of an exclusive Western education, which is issuing in such thoughtless actions as trying to fence off God and religion from



our public and communal concerns. But those who still think of the material civilization of the West as the greatest and latest event in history seem hardly aware of the fact that secularism has already turned tail there—on the ideological plane we mean. The Western civilization has reached a point where it will stop if it does not go down in a cataclysm of disaster. No view about Sanskrit can be more illfounded. Sanskrit represents a culture that is far from dead. Sanskrit is not Latin or Greek. Nor is Vedanta on a level with other faiths, which are just leaves torn from its book and misunderstood by being read without the context. If the entire past of humanity is capable of throwing any light on the future then we doubt not in the least that the culture represented by Sanskrit will provide the spiritual basis of the superstructure of a new cosmopolitan civilization realizing the broadest and most sublime conceptions of justice and liberty.

There are not a few who think of Indian culture in some such way as follows. If the entire past of Turkey went by the board in order that the Turks might become a modern, secular nation, why can we not in the same way jump clear of all history and heritage? It is easy to cite historical parallels and easier still to miss the point and draw wrong lessons from them. The Turks have attempted to go back to their Turkish past and have repudiated a culture whose resources, material and spiritual, proved inadequate to the challenge thrown out by the West. But what have they done or achieved at all? They have gone another way and made themselves carbon-copies of the West, and the West despises them more than it ever did, precisely for this reason. One should like to know what new values the Turks are creating or contributing to the fund of human civilization? At present it appears that they have only expanded the market for the machine goods of the West. The only possible course for Turkey now seems either to remain in the

embrace of America or go into that of Russia. The Turk has caught a Tartar. It will be interesting to watch the consequence of a situation in which history has reversed a proverb. ...

Pandit Nehru in his address also complimented the Osmania University for its unique achievement in making Urdu the medium of instruction in the University in all its stages. According to our information the Hyderabad Government has developed by means of its political and economic power what is known as high Urdu, that is to say, a Urdu full of Arabic and Persian words. This has been done in a country where both the Hindus (more than 80% of the population) and the Muslims speak other tongues. And what results have been gained?

No, Hyderabad has only replaced English by another foreign language which, in script and vocabulary, is archaic and inadequate, and more difficult to learn, and less profitable when learnt, than English. It seems politics is increasingly creating a situation in the country in which truth that requires to be spoken cannot be spoken. But there are truths which can be ignored only at our peril.\*

In this connection, though the present note has, in spite of ourselves, become rather long, we want to put before our readers the weighty observations of the foremost linguist in modern India which are very relevant to our present discussion. We give them below under another heading.

#### DR SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI ON SANSKRIT AND HINDI

In the course of an interesting article on the last International Linguistic Congress in Paris held from 18th July 1948, Dr Chatterji writes:

\*Hyderabad is, however, gently yielding to the real forces of the situation. The Osmania University has declared that from the next academic term *Hindustani* with *Nagari* script will also be introduced as a medium of University education. We take it as only a step in the right direction.

### APPEAL OF SANSKRIT

After my 'allocation' (speech by Dr Chatterji at the Congress) was over, some of the members who sat near me shook hands with me, and others later expressed their pleasure at my having quoted some Sanskrit for them, and congratulated me on the appropriateness to the occasion of some of my sentiments. I thought I was right in assuming that as speakers of Indo-European languages, Sanskrit will always have its appeal for them. This is a great fact which we frequently lose sight of in India, particularly our political leaders wedded to a peculiar type of ideology. Sanskrit is our greatest and strongest spiritual and intellectual link with the nations of Europe. Sanskrit stands for discipline and correct habits of thinking, for order and precision; and to strengthen the Sanskrit element in our Indian speeches will be not only a strengthening of our intellectual life but will also link us, while maintaining our own special and independent cultural status, much more strongly and closely with the Indo-European-speaking West. It will also make equally strong those ties which bind us through Buddhism and Indian culture with the peoples of the Far East and of South-eastern Asia.

Iran (and Afghanistan) will recognize her own sister in a Sanskrit-using India, while India in this way retains her separate identity and originality. And the Arab world will have proper respect for an India which holds her head high and offers her hand of fellowship in the same quest for the Ultimate Reality, although along the different path of another language; and India will be saved from the humiliation of playing the unenviable role of an indigent 'client' (*maud'h*) and lunge-on to Arabdom in the sphere of higher thought and culture. The Turks and the Irani people, and even the Afghans (i.e. the intellectuals and thought-leaders among them), are seeking to rehabilitate the bases of their own special culture through a revival of the Turkic or Turanian and Aryan character of it. Indian culture has been enriched in certain ways by its borrowings from Islamic culture and Islamic thought, which for India meant Persian culture and Sufi mysticism. This has become engrafted irrevocably upon our culture and we must give due recognition to it, must study it in its fundamentals and must derive all the spiritual, intellectual, and material benefit that we have received or can receive from it. But we should remember always, irrespective of caste and creed, that the Sanskrit language and the name *Sanskrit* stands as the symbol of all our past achievements as a people—these are the hall-marks of our civilization, they form the passport for an honoured place in the concourse of nations and they also indicate the way in which it has been given to India to be of service to humanity.

I need not describe in detail the six days' sittings and deliberations and social functions relating to the

Congress. There were some eight "Questions" or topics already announced and passed on to as many select scholars, who contributed their views on them; and these were in our hands and there were discussions on them in which those who wished took part. I spoke in four of these—on Universal Categories for all Languages, on Research in Language, on Linguistic Terminology, and on Inter-linguistics with the question of International Language or Languages.

In the course of these discussions I made reference to the nature of linguistic work that is being done in India at the present day (I had already sent in a detailed statement, compiled with the help of colleagues all over India, of the work done in the different branches of Linguistics in India during the last nine years, the years of war from 1939 to 1948, which it is intended to publish along with similar reports for other countries). The necessity of enriching international linguistic terminology from Sanskrit was also stressed by me.

### UNO AND HINDI

The Uno has recognised five languages in its deliberation—English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. In our Congress meetings, four languages were freely used—French, English, Italian, and German. Some Slav members who were quite prominent did not press the matter, but there was a feeling noticeable among some of them in favour of Russian as the greatest of Slav languages and their representative. Every fifth man in the world is an Indian, and 4/5ths of that Indian person has as his most natural pan-Indian speech Hindi, and this Hindi goes to Sanskrit for its culture-words, which it has in common with most of the other Indian languages. So that Sanskritic Hindi may in not a distant future have to be given a place beside its cousin-speeches. French, English, Spanish and Russian, and beside Chinese, as one of the great languages of the world. This last observation of mine evoked some interest among members. From quite unexpected quarters I heard enquiries about Hindi and the linguistic situation in India—from Norway, from Czechoslovakia, from America. (The importance of Arabic is cultural rather than numerical—there are more people in the world speaking Bengali than Arabic, and it will depend upon the place created once again for Arabdom by the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Iraqis, the Saudi Arabs, the Algerians and others, whether their language will obtain once again its old international position. Moreover, through natural change, the old Arabic speech has split up into dialects which are sometimes mutually unintelligible. A common or universal modern Arabic for speaking and writing is a desideratum, and it is to be seen if this can be evolved; or it would mean a revival of classical Arabic in a modified form). ....

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SWAMI AKHANDANANDA AND HIS MEMOIRS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.** By SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA. Published by the *Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, Dadar, Bombay*. Pp. 69. Price Re. 1/-.

This booklet gives in the first part, in simple words, a brief biography of Swami Akhandananda, one of the sixteen direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and his memoirs of his Master in the second half. Swami Akhandananda was an embodiment of selfless service, irrespective of caste or creed. His heart flowed towards the poor and the suffering breaking through all barriers. In the nineties of the last century, even before the great Swami Vivekananda, his brother disciple, preached his gospel of mass uplift, he had started his work among the masses of Rajaputana. He was to be found organizing relief wherever there was suffering due to famine or flood. He started the first famine relief in Bengal as early as 1897, as an extension of which he started an orphanage. That he started and stuck on to the orphanage, where he had both Hindu and Muslim boys, which he started in Sargachhi, a remote village in Bengal, for over 40 years till his death, though he became the supreme head of the Ramakrishna Order, speaks volumes for his utter self-abnegation and loving service of the poor and the suffering. He introduced spinning and weaving and other village handicrafts in his orphanage,

understanding their full significance in the village economy, even before the Swadeshi Movement, which Gandhiji launched later on on a large scale.

His memoirs of Sri Ramakrishna show the utter simplicity and faith of Sri Ramakrishna and his great love for mankind, which characteristic Swami Akhandananda derived from his Master. It throws light on the way in which Sri Ramakrishna used to train his disciples to attain their highest stature without doing violence to their nature.

The booklet inspires the reader with a spirit of service.

**HOMAGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI.** *Public Relations Officer, All India Radio, New Delhi*. Pp. 112. Price Re 1.

The death of Gandhiji evoked universal condolence from all parts of the world—especially from all the leaders of India; for as K. Subba Rau says, 'he made heroes out of common clay.'

Here are collected the tributes from the various Indian leaders, broadcast to the nation in memory of the Mahatma, from the All India Radio. Beautifully got-up, with many pictures, it is attractive, though tinged with sadness all over the pages. The AIR has done well in collecting and presenting these tributes to the public as a commemorative volume.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna, was started in the year 1922 and since then it has been functioning as a centre of charitable, educational and religious activities in this capital city of Bihar. Through the hearty co-operation of the public and the devoted services of a valiant band of selfless monastic and lay workers, the Ashrama has developed from humble beginnings into a very useful institution. This centre runs at present a free Upper Primary School for boys of poor backward communities, an outdoor Charitable Dispensary, a Public Library and Reading Room and a Students' Home. It organises also relief works according as occasions arise. Moreover, scripture classes, periodical lectures and discourses on the lives and gospels of great prophets and incarnations are held in and outside the Ashrama to stimulate spiritual culture and develop in all a catholic outlook in the light of the

lofty teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

We need hardly point out that we are to depend entirely on public donations and subscriptions for the upkeep of the Ashrama and the management and expansion of its varied activities. Unfortunately, the humanitarian services of this philanthropic institution are being greatly hampered at present for want of adequate funds. Liberal help in the shape of donations is urgently needed to meet the pressing demands of this centre. We therefore appeal to our generous countrymen to extend their financial support to our noble cause and thus help forward the man-making and nation-building activities we have been carrying on for the benefit of all. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI TEJASANANDA  
Secretary

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 1st March 1949.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

MARCH, 1949

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MARCH, 1949

No. 9



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

228 West 39 Street  
New York  
The 8th December '95

Dear Joe Joe—

After 10 days of the most disastrous voyage I ever had I arrived in New York. I was so so sick for days together.

After the clean and beautiful cities of Europe, New York appears very dirty and miserable. I am going to begin work next Monday. Your bundles have been safely delivered to the heavenly pair as Alberta calls them. They are as usual very kind. Saw Mrs and Mr Salomon and other friends. By chance met Mrs Peak at Mrs Gurnsey's but yet have no news of Mrs Rothiburger. Going with the birds of paradise to Ridgely this Christmas—wish ever so much you were there.

Had you a nice visit with Lady Isabell? Kindly give my love to all our friends—and know oceans yourself.

Excuse this short letter—I will write bigger ones by the next.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

Almora  
10th July 1897

My dear Joe Joe—

I am glad to learn that you have at last found out that I have time to read your letters. I have taken to the Himalayas, tired of lecturing and orating. I am so sorry



the doctors would not allow my going over with the Raja of Khetri to England and that has made Sturdy mad.

The Seviërs are at Simla and Miss Muller here in Almora.

The plague has subsided but the famine is still here and as it looks (on account of no rain as yet) it may wear a yet terrible aspect.

I am very busy from here directing work in some of the famine districts by my boys.

Do come by all means—only you must remember this. The Europeans and the Hindus (called 'Natives' by the Europeans) live as oil and water. Mixing with Natives is damning to the Europeans.

There are no good hotels to speak of even at the capitals. You will have to travel with a number of servants about you (cost cheaper than hotels). You will have to bear with people who wear only a loin cloth, you will see me with only a loin cloth about me. Dirt and filth everywhere and brown people. But you will have plenty of men to talk to you philosophy. If you mix with the English much here you will have more comforts but see nothing of the Hindus as they are. Possibly I will not be able to eat with you, but I promise that I will travel to good many places with you and do everything in my power to make your journey pleasant. These are what you expect—if anything good comes so much the better. Perhaps Mary Hale may come over with you. There is a young lady, Miss Campbell, Orchard Lake, Orchard Island, Michigan, who is a great worshipper of Krishna and lives alone in that Island fasting and praying—she will give anything to be able to see India once—but she is awfully poor—if you bring her with you, I will anyhow manage to pay her expenses. If Mrs Bull brings old Landsberg with her that will be saving that fool's life as it were.

Most probably I may accompany you back to America. Kiss Holister for me and the baby. My love to Alberta, to the Leggetts and to Mabel—What is Fox doing? Give him my love when you see him. To Mrs Bull and S. Saradananda my love. I am as strong as ever but it all depends upon leading a quiet life ever afterwards. No hurly burly any more.

I had a great mind to go to Tibet this year; but they would not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing. However, I content myself with galloping hard over precipices on mountain ponies. This is more exciting than your bicycle even, although I had an experience of that at Wimbledon. Miles and miles of uphill and miles and miles of downhill, the road a few feet broad hanging over sheer precipices several thousand feet deep below.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

P.S. The best time to come is to arrive in India by October or beginning of November—December, January and February you see things all over and then start by the end of February. From March it begins to get hot. Southern India is *always* hot.

V.

Goodwin has gone to work in Madras on a paper to be started there soon.

V.

Darjeeling  
The 29th April '98

My dear Joe Joe—

I have had several attacks of fever—the last being influenza.

It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I gather strength enough to undertake the journey, I come down to Calcutta.

On Sunday I leave Darjeeling—probably stopping for a day or two at Kurseong, then direct to Calcutta. Calcutta must be very hot just now. Never mind it is all the better for influenza. In case the plague breaks out in Calcutta—I must not go anywhere—and you start for Kashmir with Sadananda. How did you like the old gentleman Devendra Nath Tagore? Not as stylish as 'Han Baba' with Moon God and Sun God of course. What enlightens your insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, and Moon God, and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep? It is hunger that keeps my consciousness up, I have discovered. Oh, the great doctrine of correspondence of light!! Think how dark the world has been all these ages without it!! And all this knowledge and love and work and all the Buddhas, and Krishnas and Christs—vain, vain have been their lives and work—for they did not discover *that* 'which keeps the inner light when the Sun and Moon were gone to the limbo' for the night!! Delicious isn't it?

If the plague comes to my native city I am determined to make myself a sacrifice and that, I am sure, is a 'Darn sight better way to Nirvana' than pouring oblation to all that ever twinkled.

I have had a good deal of correspondence with Madras with the result that I need not send them any help just now. On the other hand I am going to start a paper in Calcutta. I will be ever so much obliged if you help me starting that. As always with undying love,

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELURMATH, OCTOBER, 1918

A boy devotee saw Mahapurush Maharaj in a dream and wrote to him about it. He has now come to the *math*, with his permission, to stay here for some time. One morning Mahapurush Maharaj had just returned from the shrine. The devotee fell at his feet and, praying to him for *mantra diksha* (initiation with a name of God) said:

'Maharaj, you very kindly appeared to me in a dream. It is my heart's desire that you kindly initiate me into spiritual life.'

So saying he caught hold of Mahapurushji's feet. Observing the earnestness of the devotee Mahapurushji said in an affectionate voice:

'My child, you have my abundant blessings. May your devotion and love to the lotus feet of the Master and faith in Him increase evermore day by day. May you advance far towards Him. I do not know anything about initiation, nor have I ever initiated anybody. The Master has not put

in my mind the least feeling of *guruhood*. I am His servant, His child. Apart from it I have not as yet received any command from the Master to initiate people. I know the name 'Ramakrishna' is the *mantra* of this age. Devotion and spiritual liberation will be like an *amalaka* fruit in the palm of the hand to one who will lovingly repeat the name of the Master, the saviour of the fallen and the *avatar* of the age. Ramakrishna is the password for the age. For the spiritual liberation of a person repetition of the name of Ramakrishna is enough. I do not think there is any further need for initiation. There is not a shadow of doubt that whoever will wholeheartedly take refuge in Sri Ramakrishna and repeat His name will attain spiritual liberation. He who was Rama and He who was Krishna has manifested Himself in this age as Ramakrishna for the salvation of humanity.

The devotee: I am repeating the Master's name as much as I can and am also praying to Him. I also fully believe that He is the Incarnation of God in this age. You belong to the inner-most circle of His devotees; if I only had your grace my life would be blessed—this is my firm conviction.

Mahapurushji: You have my blessings already, otherwise why should I be saying so much to you? I pray earnestly that you may attain goodness. When you have come to have complete faith in His mercy and Incarnation, there is no more fear. You are very fortunate, for faith in God's Incarnation in every age is had only as a result of abundant good actions in previous lives. When you have that, what fear can be for you? I say this and believe what I say, namely, you will surely become liberated from this bondage of limited existence. Go on calling on Him with a full heart and pray to Him yearningly. He will make your belief still more firm and your heart will be filled with love and faith.

The devotee: How should I do *japa*? Are there special rules for it?

Mahapurushji: Taking the name of God repeatedly and with love is *japa*. Do that, and you will find joy as you go on practising it. There are no special rules for *japa*. *Japa* can be done always—while walking, moving about, eating, lying down, in sleep, in the dream, and in the waking state. The real thing is love. The more you repeat His name with love, the more joy will you derive from it. He is the Inward Ruler and He sees the heart. If you feel true yearning of the heart and call on Him earnestly, you will see its effect immediately. Ask from Him faith, love, and devotion in the same way as a child solicits a boon from its parents; you are sure to get them. He is a living God, the saviour of the fallen, the destroyer of the impurities of the materialistic age, supremely merciful, devoted to his worshippers, and full of love. Go on repeating His name as much as you can. You should of course do *japa* always and as much as lies in your power, but it is especially very necessary to do it every morning and evening at a fixed time and from a fixed seat. Do that.

The devotee: Maharaj, how should I meditate on Him? I try meditation; but neither do I understand well what is meditation nor can I do it properly.

Mahapurushji: Meditation is a little difficult at first. When by His grace a love for Him will grow in your heart as you continue your *japa* and prayers, meditation will become very easy. Without trying meditation in the beginning sit before the image of Sri Ramakrishna, who is immaculate, supremely merciful, the Teacher of the age, untouched by lust or greed or blemish, and pray to Him crying like a child saying, 'O Lord, you have incarnated yourself in human form for the salvation of the world and have suffered so

much for humanity. I am very poor and infirm, without spiritual practice, worship, knowledge, love, faith, and devotion. Be gracious to me, and grant me faith, love, knowledge, devotion, and purity. May this human birth of mine attain its true end. Manifest yourself in my heart by your grace and reveal yourself to me. It is a son of yours who has taught me to pray to you like this. Do have grace on me.'

By continuing to pray in this way you will have His grace. The mind will then quiet down and become absorbed in *japa* and meditation. You will feel love and joy in your mind, and hope will return to your heart. After praying a great deal in this way do *japa* as I have told you to do. Meditation will come of itself as you go on repeating His holy name. While doing *japa* concentrate your mind on the idea that He is lovingly gazing at you. This thought itself, when it will last in the same way for a long time, will be meditation. While you repeat His name pray to Him: 'O Lord, help me to meditate on you.' And sure enough He will do that. He is the *guru* in everybody's heart, the Path-finder, Lord, Father, Mother, or Friend. To think of His auspicious form with love, or of His qualities, in any way is meditation. Now go on practising in this way. Later on and according to your need He will acquaint you from within how you should meditate. Call on Him with great yearning and cry for Him as much as you can. The weeping will wash away all the dirt of the heart, and He will reveal His nature out of His grace. All these do not happen in a day or of a sudden. Go on practising and calling on Him; sure enough you will have His response and find joy.

The devotee: It is the very yearning which is lacking. How can this yearning for Him be developed?

Mahapurushji: My child, no one can teach yearning to another. It comes of itself in

right time. The more you feel the want of God in your heart the more the yearning will grow. If it does not arise, know that the time is not yet ripe. Mother knows which of Her children requires to be fed and when. If it is late, Mother herself knows that the child should be fed late. She alone knows the reason for this. The Lord is the Mother. One must have the fullest faith in Her and resign oneself to Her completely. She is not like the worldly mother. She knows your heart. She truly knows which among Her children sincerely wants to see Her, and She reveals Herself in just the time. Go on calling on the Lord as much as you can. Resign yourself completely to Him; He will give you all you need in proper time. Purity is the foundation of spiritual life. God manifests Himself quickly in a pure heart. Try to remain pure in thought, word, and deed. Now yours is the life of a student. Student life is very pure. The Master used to have great love for boys who were pure-hearted and without worldly desires. One whose mind has not been soiled by sense enjoyment will have enlightenment quickly. Further, faith and reverence are necessary. Believe with a simple heart all that I have told you and devote yourself to *sadhana* in exactly the same way. you will see that He will be graceful, and you will have great joy. The fact is that you will have to struggle. The Master used to say, 'If you only go on simply saying orally *siddhi*, *siddhi*, (he-m-p) it will never produce intoxication. You will have to procure *siddhi*, you must labour to make a paste of it, and eat it, then alone can you feel the effect.' In the same way call on God's name, meditate on Him, and pray to Him with sincerity, then alone you will find joy.

The devotee: I came with great hope that you will kindly initiate me. Please have mercy on me.

Mahapurushji : My child, I have already told you that I have not so far received any command from the Master in the matter of initiation. Do not worry about *diksha* (initiation). Go on calling on Him sincerely. He will listen to your prayers and fulfil your heart's desire. He will surely make all arrangements when the need for initiation will arise for you. I also pray sincerely that you may have fullest faith in the Lord and be completely resigned to His feet. May your heart be filled with love and purity and may the Lord daily increase your faith, love, and devotion. I pray in all earnestness.' As he was saying all these he shut his eyes, remaining so for a while. Afterwards placing his two hands on the head of the devotee he blessed him with his eyes closed. Overpowered by emotion, the devotee also began to shed tears. When he became a little quiet, Mahapurushji lovingly gave him the Master's *prasad* (the food that had been offered to Him) to eat. ...

In that year the Holy Mother was staying in the house on Mukherji Lane (now Udbodhan Lane) in Baghbazar. Sarat Maharaj (Swami Saradananda) was also there. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) and Hari Maharaj (Swami Turiyananda) were at Balaram Babu's house.

After a few days' stay at the Math the said devotee expressed a desire to go to Calcutta in order to see the Holy Mother and the other companion disciples of the Master and sought Mahapurushji's permission for it. Mahapurushji said, 'Yes, you should go by all means. You have come so near and should you not see them? You are very fortunate that they are all now in Calcutta. This is a rare opportunity. First of all go to Baghbazar and see the Holy Mother. She is the Mother of us all. ... She has come as an aid to the Master's mission. ... None of us has suc-

ceeded in understanding her. She is so deep and her realizations remain so much without expression that none can understand her. She does not at all want to express herself. She conducts herself like the ordinary women of the household, doing all work and serving the devotees. Who will say that she is Divine? The Master one day told me, "The Mother who is in the Temple and the Mother in the *nahabat* (the small musical concert room in Dakshineswar where the Holy Mother used to live) are indetical." After saluting the mother pray to Her devotedly for love and faith. If she becomes pleased one can easily have everything—devotion and liberation. Sarat Maharaj is there also at the Udbodhan. He is a supremely heroic *sevak* (servant) of the mother. See him also. If you tell him, he will arrange for you to have the mother's *darshan*. After you have received mother's blessings go to Balaram Babu's house. Maharaj and Hari Maharaj are there. Tell them when you meet them that I have sent you for their *darshan*. They will bless you profusely. Maharaj is the spiritual son of the Master. If you receive his blessings, think that you have received the Master's blessings. The spiritual power of the Master is at present flowing into the world through him. Hari Maharaj is Shukadeva himself, he is Vedanta incarnate and has known Brahman. So long as they are in this gross corporeal form, men are fortunate to be blessed by having their *darshan*, holy company, and good wishes. After this they will be objects of meditation, and will only be seen with great difficulty by the power of meditation. This is a very auspicious time. Have their *darshan* with great reverence and faith. And when you go back home remember all these, namely, that you have stayed at the Math, the place of the Master on the Ganges, the holy company of so many sadhus etc. and meditate on them. This will cleanse your heart. You are very fortunate.'

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (II)

BY THE EDITOR

The conception of man and of human destiny outlined in our previous article gives us, it will be seen, a very definite criterion of progress, individual and social. It is a frame of reference that is wide and stable and capable of rating all the relative values of man. But this spiritual conception, because it refuses to recognize society as an end and to stabilize human development at the level it has reached in general, rouses the antagonism of the self-sufficient man. The self-sufficient man refuses to budge from his system of stereotyped and fixed responses. He can conceive of society as dynamic, but not so human nature. Or in so far as he is prepared to admit the possibility of moral mutation, he believes this can be done by frothing pious platitudes, by a simple exhortation to will without an ideal, or by a change of material environment. This last is the theory of 'ideological superstructure' of civilization, that is to say, the theory that our ideas and ideals are the products of material changes. Such a conception turns things upside down, freeing us from all moral obligation as we understand it. So argument is employed to proclaim the divine right of natural appetites.

It has for this reason been widely held in our day that trying to seek one's spiritual progress and liberation is antithetical to trying to do one's duty to one's neighbour and society. In fact one of the most widespread and persistent charges against religion, and against Indian spirituality in particular, has been that it is indifferent to human suffering and apathetic to social improvement. A long line of Christian writers of the West have also joined their voice in telling us and the world that Indian spirituality makes light of ethics or 'morality of action', since it denies evil to be an essential factor of reality and declares the man of Realization to be one who

can never be touched by bad actions. It is therefore argued that Indian religions have not understood pain as Christianity has done and, therefore, social amelioration or doing one's duty to one's neighbour forms no part of them.\* This will, of course, sound even to an Indian peasant as preposterous as saying that fire is cold. But not so to many of those Indians who have received all their education and ideas and measuring rods from the West. In this matter, as in others, these pundits, having swallowed Gibbon and Marx, Freud and Frazer, and knowing no better, have danced and continue to dance as the West has piped to them. The fact, however, is just the contrary.

We, of course, agree that this narrow interpretation has been forced upon religion by a section of its votaries, mostly elsewhere. This is particularly true of the history of orthodox and official Christianity in the West which drew a sharp line between an imperfect world under the sky and a perfect heaven somewhere above the clouds. The reason is that in spite of the practical value of its disciplines, it lacked a rational basis in sound metaphysic. It carried over into its system certain dogmatic beliefs from Judaism, and had, later on, under early Greek influence, a liberal infusion of Greek, particularly crude Aristotelian metaphysics, which determined its closed system of theology for over a millennium and a half. The influence of Aristotle has proved disastrous for both science and philosophy, and also for religion in the long run. For this reason all advance, whether in science, or philosophy, spirituality in the West, since the time of

\*This old and preposterous fancy, which one might have thought dead, reappears in the recent but misleading and fantastic book, *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*, by George Catlin.

Renaissance, has begun by a repudiation of the authority of the great Master. It is therefore not at all odd that the West violently reacts to the suggestion of authority of any kind. Unfortunately, however, instead of finding a rational and empirical basis of faith, the West continued to think of religion in Aristotelian terms and so imagined that religion stands opposed to science and social improvement.

But such an antithesis can nowhere be found in the vast body of our spiritual literature, and exists nowhere else except in the imagination of those who say so. There are aberrations of course, as there are aberrations in every field, but such aberrations have no justification in authoritative literature or practice. The Indian conception of life and *dharma* is integral and makes no distinction between things sacred and things secular in an absolute sense. What would be regarded elsewhere as a most profane and unspiritual act can be in Indian eyes spiritual and helpful under certain circumstances. And what is apparently the holiest of acts can be unspiritual, if it is not done with a right motive. Such fancied antithesis is due to lack of acquaintance with Indian ideas. A brief discussion will make clear the difference between the Indian conception of *dharma* and the Western idea of religion.

Indian civilization is indissolubly linked up with the conception of *atman* or man as a spirit. This has been pointed out before. But so much is involved in the idea that unless we draw out a little more fully some of its contents, it will remain vague and generally incomprehensible. The *atman* has, of course, been conceived in different ways for practical reasons. The *atman* is both the finite—infinite self of our actual empirical experience, which presents such contradictions as freedom and constraint, permanence and change, together, and the infinite, eternal, and free Self that is the result or fact of the highest experience. Spiritual progress means

just a movement from a present contradictory status of self to the Self that is free from all such determinations. But this liberation of consciousness from limitations cannot be achieved by a sudden jump; we move towards it in stages by grasping an idea that is higher and rejecting the one that is lower. We can get rid of a lower organization of sentiments only by cultivating higher ones, till at last we acquire enough strength to go beyond all such imaginations. This is the reason for viewing Self differently by the different schools. All of them, however, hold that all perfection and purity and power reside in the *atman*, which have become obscured by a veil of ignorance. Spiritual liberation consists in becoming aware of this fact, or in Self-knowledge. Freedom is not a passage into another world which lies somewhere at the periphery of the universe to enjoy a new life of eternity in time, but is the realization, here and now, of all things in the Self and the Self in all things. Indian civilization is characterized by this consistent intuition of unity of all life. Reality is a seamless whole of the highest experience, and this fundamental unity is broken up into a manifold by our animal senses. This is the highest knowledge and freedom, the highest bliss and fulfilment, the aim and purpose of all our endeavours. The intuition, of course, is not unknown to others. This is evident from the teachings of Jesus, or Lao Tze, or Rumi. But such instances are rare and have been misunderstood and frowned upon where they arose. It does not form part of the tradition of other civilizations. And nowhere else has this intuition been made the basis of social organization or of education.

The Religion of Eternity (*sanatana dharma*) does not stand on a level with the religions of salvation in heaven. You cannot force it into their framework. It is not a closed system that refuses to admit questions or fails to find answers to the new problems with which the developing experience of

humanity confronts it. It rests upon a metaphysic of truth which can never be exhaustively formulated in terms of intellectual conceptions, but can always be adapted to all concrete situations.

The Eternal Gospel has been laid down by the vedic *rishis* mentioned in the *mantra*, *namaste rishibhyah purvebhyah purvajebhyah pathikritebhyah*. They are the *pathikrits*, the path-makers, of Religion. They preached originally two broad ways of this Religion as the foundation and aim of a civilized community, namely, the *pravrittiddharma* and the *nivrittiddharma*. *Dvididho hi vedoktodharmah pravrittikalashano nivrittikalashanashcha*. *Pravrittiddharma* is ritualistic religion, while *nivrittiddharma* is the way of renunciation. They form the two wings of a complete *dharma*. *Pravrittiddharma*, or religion as it is commonly understood, lays down means for the attainment of happiness and enjoyment (*abhyudaya*) in this world or in a heaven. It is the direct (*sakshat*) cause of such advancement here and hereafter. It is a religion based on the conception of a determinate personality and it aims at an extension of this life of the world with increased power and pleasure minus its sorrows and frustrations.

Religions as practised all over the world are mainly variations of this *pravrittiddharma*. They have certain common methods for the attainment of their goals. First, there is the worship of a Personal God or gods, or a Saviour; secondly, all enjoin practice of charity, doing good to one's neighbour, cultivation of moral virtues like love and friendship for all. The worship takes the form of offering flowers, incense, light, and food etc. Certain rituals, more or less of a common kind, are followed. In the vedic time the followers of the *pravrittiddharma* offered animal sacrifices to gods. The Jews offered burnt animal sacrifice to Jehovah. The Christians have their sacraments and say grace over their food. The Mahomedans have their

*Korbani* and *neyaj*. All aim at heaven. These are the common and essential features. There are differences, but they are not fundamental.

The *nivrittiddharma*, on the other hand, is peculiar to India alone. It is the path of renunciation, its direct goal being *nishchreyasa* or *shreyas*, which means spiritual liberation or freedom of Self from the bondage of the illusory and limited ego, the liberation of consciousness from the stream of matter (body and mind) to which it seems hooked so unaccountably. Freedom is knowledge to be gained by means of *abhyasa* (repeated and constant practice of remembrance or Self-awareness through meditation etc.) and *vairagya* (non-attachment or renunciation). This *nivrittiddharma* is followed by the different schools of Vedanta, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Pashupatas, the Vaishnavas, and numerous other sects belonging to other schools of the *agamas*. The differences among the schools rest mainly upon the way they conceive of *atman* or perfection and certain external observances, *abhyasa* and *vairagya* and practice of a number of ethical virtues being common to all. These divergences are, however, the different outward forms of a basic and real unity of aim.

*Pravrittiddharma* in its different varieties, each with a particular scripture and a saviour of its own and with its determinate conception of the Deity and of the human personality, is to be found outside India. Yet, though India has varieties of *pravrittiddharma*, they do not have the above characteristics which mark the faiths that arose outside India. For one thing, all the sects here revere certain scriptures and certain teachers and sages in common. They do not base their faiths on a single person or one scripture, but on a tradition that is superpersonal and is claimed by all. Even the Buddhists and the Jains refer to a line of teachers teaching an eternal doctrine in the world in the different epochs of its history. In fact in India a man of religion, whatever be his personal spiritual



ideal (*ishtadevata*) or way of *sadhana*, venerates all faiths and all spiritual men. The *tantras* say that a quarrelsome attitude towards faiths other than one's own is the mark of a *pashu* (literally beast) or a 'natural' man. Apart from this, there does not exist a real cleavage between the *pravrittiddharma* and the *nivrittiddharma*. Though *pravrittikarma* has been defined by Manu as ritualistic worship performed with a desire for ends here and hereafter, and as leading to happiness and heaven, yet he goes on to say that the same actions performed with spiritual knowledge and without desire (for personal ends) become *nivrittikarma* and lead to *nirvana* or freedom :

*Sukhabhyudayikamchaiva nihshreyasika-*  
*meva cha*  
*Pravrittamcha nivrittamcha dvividho*  
*karma vaidikam*  
*Iha chamutra va kamat pravrittam karma*  
*kirtiyate*  
*Nishkamam jnama purvantu nivritta-*  
*mupadishyate*

If we devote even a little thought to the concept of *nishkama karma*, which is so familiar to Indians but unfamiliar elsewhere, and which is found not only in the *Gita* but in the entire field of our religious and philosophical literature, we shall discover it is one of the few most momentous and constructive ideas in the history of civilization. The matter opens up entirely new vistas of thought and enquiry, which, however, cannot be pursued here.

There is reason to believe that early in vedic times and also subsequently to a lesser extent an attempt was made by ritualists to develop what may be called a 'totalitarian' creed of vedic ritualism. This tendency sought to represent *pravrittiddharma* in a narrow sense, that is, in the sense of the *dharma* of vedic sacrifices and of heaven. It was, they said, the only authentic path laid by Tradition and was binding upon all the members of the Aryan community. But the

pure spiritual religion which was coeval with this ritualistic creed, as tradition suggests and the *samhitas* and the *upanishads* prove beyond all doubt, could not be pushed out of the field by this narrow interpretation. In fact it is this totalitarian doctrine itself resting on a partial truth that came to be thrown out. The *Upanishads* at many places ridicule and condemn ritualism divorced from knowledge. The *Gita* also berates the *tryayi dharma anuprapanna*, the upholders of a totalitarian creed of ritualism, in the following way: *vedavada ratah partha nanyat astiiti vadinah* etc.

This distinction between *pravrittiddharma* and *nivrittiddharma* was not regarded as absolute, whether in vedic or in later times. The distinction rested upon the facts of life as they exist—on temperaments, abilities, and practical circumstances. The apparent antithesis was transcended by a superior conception, as will have been seen in Manu's comprehensive definition given above, the conception, namely, of the *mokshadharma*. This idea has been very clearly stated and elaborated in what may be called the epic period, the period when the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* came to be composed. The epics, of course, refer to a period coeval with later vedic times, though they come to be cast in their present form much later. The epics, particularly the *Mahabharata*, are the earliest encyclopaedias in history. They were compiled to preserve in a suitable literary form for the community all the main branches of knowledge, historical, social, political, and religious, of the period of civilization anterior to their composition. They were a sort of a record of India's heritage of the time. There we find *pravrittiddharma* included under *mokshadharma*, or the Religion of Liberation, as one of its wings. The idea of *yajna* has been elaborated and broadened to cover all the activities of man in society. The emphasis is entirely on service to fellow members as

well as to all creation (cf. for example the five *yajnas* enjoined in the *Brahmanas* and *Dharmashastras* on all householders). *Pravrittiddharma* performed in a spirit of worship and combined with a knowledge of the spiritual aim leads to *moksha* in the same way as *nivrittiddharma*. The two wings are also related as steps of the same ladder in the ideal of *ashramadharma*. *Moksha* becomes a universal ideal. All may not reach it in the same way or at the same time, but none need despair, for by mastering the technique of action (*yogah karmasu kaushalam*) one can, while performing whatever function one's innate abilities (*svabhava*) qualify one for, can steadily advance towards the Supreme Goal. So whatever cleavage might have been imagined or preached earlier came to be finally and clearly closed up. The *Gita* asserts emphatically that only foolish minds draw a distinction between *samkhya* (way of knowledge) and *yoga* (way of action), for both are one and lead to the same Goal. But *karma yoga*, it must be remembered, is no thoughtless or mechanical performance of duty, or a mere social gospel; it is also *buddhiyoga*, that is to say, action combined with spiritual knowledge and the pursuit of a steady aim (*vyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha* ....).

Thus all the diverse faiths and practices which are conveniently and popularly known as Hinduism (the common name is significant as pointing to elements which make it possible for us to speak of a fundamental unity), including Buddhism and Jainism, came to find their place within the framework of an universal spiritual tradition. All the different faiths taken separately are leaves torn from the book of *arsha* or *sanatana dharma* or *Vedanta*. Whenever sectarians have made an attempt to cut adrift their particular denominations from this common and broad spiritual soil, they succeeded in achieving results contrary to what they aimed at. They gradually faded

out of the total picture. But the tradition is broad enough to welcome all who do not take up a quarrelsome attitude to other ways of approach to the common goal.

The above only states what is widely recognized by all acquainted with the spirit of Indian culture. But it is well to remind ourselves of this and to make clear to others who may not know the distinction between the Western idea of religion and the Indian conception of *dharma*. In that case we may not try to force Indian ideas into the framework of Western theories, which is a common mistake; for that will be like trying to interpret adult experience in terms of a child's fancies. Indian researches in the realm of spirit are unique, and Indian concepts will certainly go to make thought deeper, broader, and more humane, elsewhere. Because of lack of such knowledge a vast amount of discussion about religion in India has proceeded in utter oblivion of a whole dimension of truth.

It will also have been seen from above that the antithesis between religion and service, between spirituality and action of morality, is imaginary. Indian tradition is optimistic and assures man of absolute conquest over evil and suffering. The goal is knowledge which is also virtue (cf. *Gita*, chap. 13, where knowledge is equated with virtue, which means that the highest knowledge is expressed in terms of the highest virtue. This reminds one of Socrates) and happiness (*sukham atyantikam*). Chapter sixteen of the *Gita* enumerates a list of virtues which contain all the morality of the world and which are a means to Liberation (*dairi sampad vimokshaya*).

*Moksha* and renunciation are related to service, *yajna*. The *Vedas* conceive of the entire cosmic process in terms of sacrifice. *Yajna* in later times came to be the key conception round which individual and collective life were organized. The *Gita* lays down that all actions are to be performed in

a spirit of sacrifice (*yajnartham karma*), putting into the *mimamsaka* conception a new content. Even a person of the highest knowledge, who is beyond all discipline and has nothing more to achieve, is required to act for the good of the world (*lokasamgraha*). There is a divine aim to be achieved in creation also. A long line of teachers have seen creation moving towards the divine event of a perfected humanity. The *Yogi* is therefore, described as being engaged in doing good to all beings (*sarvabhuta hite ratah*). Buddha preached the same gospel of spiritual liberation and service, irrespective of caste and creed. Various *agamas* have, before and after him, preached the same thing. The same idea recurs again and again throughout our history. Shankara describes the man of Realization as moving about and doing good to humanity like the springtide (*vasantavallokahitam charantah*). The Bhagavata religion, which arose in India before Buddha's time, represents the feelings of a jnani who has reached heights of spiritual perfection in the following words :

*Natvaham kamaye rajyam na svargam  
napunarbhavam*

*Kamaye dukkhataptanam praninam  
artinashanam*

'I do not desire kingdom, nor heaven, nor freedom from rebirth, but I desire the removal of the misery of all living beings inflicted with suffering.' Similar quotations can be multiplied in almost any number. All the medieval saints and preachers emphasized this idea in one voice. Philosophy in India has always been a way of life. It is no mere child of wonder or the product of an idle speculative itch searching into the beginning and end of things. Philosophic query has proceeded from the fact of suffering (*duhkhatrayabhighatat jijnasa*) as well as from the quest for an universal explanation of things (*kasmin nu vijñate* etc.). All social movements in India worthy of mention have sprung from religion. And in recent years

Swami Vivekananda gave expression to the traditional idea when he proclaimed that the national ideals of India are renunciation and service. He founded his mission on the motto *atmanoh mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha* (for one's own Liberation as well as for the good of the world). This was deliberately put into him by his own Master whose life developed and reached perfection in splendid isolation of Western ideas. The idea of a mission is inherent in Indian spirituality. Sri Krishna in the *Gita* has given a classic expression to it. Arjuna was concerned with *moksha* as a personal aim. The Lord set him right. So also Vivekananda was absorbed by the thought of *samadhi*. But Sri Ramakrishna put the idea of a mission into him. In fact nowhere else has such a determined attempt been made to arrive at a final and practical solution of human suffering irrespective of race and creed. It is not right to judge a culture of more than five thousand years by what happened in a few centuries of decadence brought about, among other things, by factors which would have put out the light of civilization altogether in other lands.

It is this spiritual conception of man and progress, the constant intuition of unity of all life, and the idea of service to God the poor, God the miserable, which have kept up the historic continuity of our culture. This tradition has had misfortunes in its long career, but was never completely lost. It has brought and held numerous peoples of the sub-continent together within the common invisible framework of an Idea. In externals, in blood and skin, in food and dress, in language and script, in art and architecture, and in numerous other ways, we are not what the vedic Indians were. Yet we believe and feel, rightly enough, that we are heirs of their culture. In spite of all these outward, and inevitable differences we do think and feel and value in some common way regarding the root problems of life. In contrast, the pre-

sent inhabitants of Greece and Rome may claim in their veins a comparatively great portion of the blood of the ancient Greeks and Romans. But they do not claim, in the same way as we do, a continuity of tradition from those ancient days. Something has come between them and their forbears. What is it? Clearly enough certain basic ideals and values.

Our consciousness of a common civilization or a nation rests ultimately on this tradition.

Indian history is at bottom an adventure of this idea. It has not only saved us or built us up together as a people, but has also been responsible, when it became really dynamic on a wide scale, for the greatest amount of social, material, and political progress that India has ever had in her life. This we propose to indicate in a brief way by taking Indian history in a wide sweep.

*(To be continued)*

## THREE KEY ANSWERS TO THREE KEY QUESTIONS

BY GERALD HEARD

There is no more striking way in which the teaching of the saints reaches our hearts than in their sudden answers to really searching questions. Three of such answers are given in the following lines. It should be possible to make a collection of such pointers as might be of great value to souls who happen to have reached some turning point in their lives. The three authorities here quoted are very different, yet their replies all give the sense of authenticity and applicability—they are wide and at the same time instant. The first to be quoted is Thomas Aquinas. He is thought of as the supreme schoolman—the strange medieval brain that could best play that odd form of verbal chess whereby you mated each other with syllogisms and gave much display of allowing your opponent to be answered but in matter of fact never yielded him the slightest concession on any of the issues debated. The whole thing was a foregone conclusion. But Thomas was, in spite of his occupation—which included that of a diplomat—a saint—one who was always breathless spiritually because he never could breathe in deeply enough of that Atmosphere of the Soul for lack of which we are always

suffocating and most of us in coma. Thomas at the end of the mass in St Nicholas Church in Naples on St Nicholas day, as he celebrated, saw; and after a silence of days was at last willing to say why he had ceased to write—his *Summa*—‘because what I have seen makes all that I have written mere chaff.’ And when he had said that he was silent again, and after a few weeks he was released. The veil, the membrane of the mind-body through which the soul can at best but breathe pain, was at last removed.

We are told that once he was asked, ‘How can I love God?’ He replied, ‘Will to love Him.’ The answer is as searching as it is simple. The problem of loving God is very real. The soul knows that it must do so, if ever it is to escape its deadly captivity to the self. But the love of God is different from any other love. The two loves we know are of persons and things. Things we love by interest—which means by so penetrating their nature that we understand them. We cannot take that kind of interest in God for we can never hope to understand Him. There is the intellectual love of God but that has nothing to do with the analytic method

that has yielded such remarkable results in our handling of inanimate nature and such ludicrous result in theology—the sad pretence at a science, which produces only greater confusion of the mind and enmity in the heart. We cannot then love God as we love things.

Our only other method of human love is our love for persons. Again we love very largely because we think we understand our friend. Most affection is little lasting because we find that our knowledge was inaccurate. But we have, if we are patient and have a real need for affection—and not merely wish to have someone to listen to us—quite extensive opportunities of understanding one another. We are very much the same—much more than our egotism lets us allow. And being gregarious creatures we have to depend largely on each other. Though then affection is always snapping, it is always being spun again—we are like spiders in that respect. And of course in all human affection there is some wish for return. Mother-love which used to be thought so selfless has now won and worn for some time the explanatory of working title—Smother love. Of course, because the above are our only two ways of human loving we cannot begin by loving God except from motives in which these two urges are paramount—we hope to gain a return, we hope to understand. Yet everyone realizes the hard truth in Spinoza's famous saying—'He who would love God must not expect God to love him.' There is, however, a third faculty in man besides the two others of interest and affection—there is the will. True, you cannot ever wholly separate the three basic faculties. But it is possible to recognize that one or the other does take the lead in any enterprise of behaviour. As we may be first touched by a person and then become interested in him and contrariwise we may be interested in a thing—an art or science and then become devoted to it—so the will may be the starter. True, the will very seldom is the initiator in anything that has to do with

our life in this world, it comes in afterwards to give us persistence. We start because as we say our interest was caught or we were touched—in fact we were passive at the beginning—only after, and to keep us going—did the will take over. But as God is not to be understood—as our minds can understand—or to be loved in the possessive way that our hearts naturally like to love, there is then only one way to love Him truly and that is as Thomas says, through the will, by willing it. That is of course not an irrational act. As the Christian Church has held, the existence of God can be deduced. By the balance of probabilities—which is the basis of all our rational acts—it is more likely than not that the Supreme Being does exist. But it is to love a deduction or indeed to have any devotion toward a plus balance of probability. But that again does not mean that one ought not. One may feel rightly some guilt because of one's inability to feel either affection or vivid interest in the Being Who though He be incomprehensible and is not for our convenience can nevertheless be argued to be worthy of adoration. We may know we ought to love Bach's B minor Mass, but because our musical taste is very poor we may only feel boredom, yet not ashamedly. Therefore after we have discovered first about God that His existence can be deduced and next about ourselves that we cannot love in any human way a deduction, we find out thirdly, that we have a faculty that just fits our very awkward need—we have the will. We don't like using the will for two reasons—in the first place it is tiring and in the second when we use it we don't seem—at least for a long while—to get any results—either outward or inward. The will is, always, for us (not for God and that is another grave difference between us) in the future tense. While inwardly when we use the will we don't get that warm sensation (which actually can make failure melodramatic) that rises from the movement of the feelings. We have little

or no sensation when the will works and often when we do have a sensation it is far from pleasant—we feel we are committed, that we have foolishly trapped ourselves. Nevertheless we know that acts of the will are our supreme human endowment—the one way we ever get control over ourselves or our environment. In a piece of doggerel which shows better than worthy verse a great Victorian poet's real conviction and probably acute regret Tennyson wrote :

‘O well for him whose will is strong  
He will not have to suffer long.’

The way to enlightenment and liberation is through acts of the will—there is no other. We find ourselves a mass of fantasy and wishful thinking—and so we shall end in the anecdotalage of senescence unless we have painfully compacted that mush, by acts of will, into a firm one-pointed consciousness by the time we are old. For whether there is a God or not, or whether we can love Him or not, there is no escaping the fact that this world is so made that we can will and out of our will a consistent consciousness can be made, but if we try to get our wish we shall end at best disillusioned—at worst in incomplete fantasy. The Bardo of the *Mahayana* seems a terribly convincing attempt to show people into what headlong delirium the soul must be plunged which leaves the anchorage of the body before it has transmuted all the pandemonic force of fantasy which should by acts of the will have been shaped into the one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Will. The human will is then the specific faculty whereby man gets into touch with the Supreme Being. ‘Thy will be done’, as Eckhart says, is the one complete and all powerful prayer. ‘But I can’t go on saying that’—is the usual answer and a fair one. If we think that we are simply saying encore to the Infinite our part becomes a little otiose. He does not need our aid, still less our applause to encourage Him to do what He is always intending and can never be turned from. It is here that faith comes in

—the naked faith of which the masters of prayer so often speak. We make an act of faith that when we exercise our will and intend that we shall will only what God wills, something actually does happen. We will, and thereafter don’t feel or speak or behave a whit the better. ‘Nothing has happened,’ says the ordinary consciousness, ‘had anything taken place I should have felt the effect.’ Yet we know that when the high non-sensuous consciousness works, our everyday consciousness is utterly unaware of it. That has been proved in all work on Extra-Sensory Perception. The cards used for the scoring will show after, that you have been exercising this power. But while you are actually doing it you will have no feeling of any sort to guide you when you have ‘hit’ right and when you have missed. We know then that God is regarding us and that we can regard Him. When then we bring ourselves into an act of relationship with Him by willing that His Will be ours we are like a patient who puts himself into the focus of an X-ray. He will feel nothing or see nothing while the operation is on. And not for some days, perhaps for many, will he experience any improvement. He might say, even when the improvement comes, ‘As I saw nothing to account for it when being given the so-called treatment, what beneficial effect I now experience may just as likely be due to some natural improvement and have nothing to do with this theory of invisible radiation.’ But this illustration makes the relationship easier than it actually is. We know that God is confronting us, we know by deduction that as He exists we do come into relationship with Him whenever we make an act of the will to do so. But that is all. As to how He will act when and where, we are of course always in the dark—the dark of blind faith. T.H. Huxley used to speak of life being played by each of us being confronted by a ‘veiled antagonist’ the other side of the board. The simile is a telling one—one that none with

even the slightest experience of prayer but knows to be descriptive of much of the time spent in prayer. In chess the greater the master with which one is confronted the more certain one may be that his moves will leave one in the dark. One may be sure only of two things—that every time I move, without exception a move of reply will be made and secondly, every one of those moves is directed to take away all my freedom to move. Yet even here the analogy is far too feeble. For the best chess master has a finite mind and must play a game confined within the simple rules of the game, a game which is to end with one of the antagonists unable to move. The game the soul plays with its Maker is not only played with an infinite opponent, whose resources are inexhaustible but also the aim of His 'play' is not to take away the soul's freedom but to restore that freedom to it and to keep on so doing until at length the soul has won the power to retain it. Even if we were allowed to view the 'board' entire—instead of through the slit aperture of what we call the present moment—how could we hope to understand at each move, or a whole life-time of moves, the strategy of the Master ?

We are, therefore, confined to the one exercise which is germane to our attempt—our intention to love God if we only knew how. We can and must keep on making these 'blind acts of the will' knowing that to each of these 'openings of the soul by the soul' God responds by a reply of infinite inscrutable aptitude. Of course it is not easy—perhaps it is the hardest thing in the whole of our lives. For it means that we must never complain—which is with us even a stronger passion than our appetite to enjoy. It means in the end we shall know that there is no chance or accident because we can now practise the constant Presence of God. And that end is far off not because it is not rationally obvious but because the newer we get to really willing to do God's will, the purer the opportunities He can and will give us of so doing. At the beginning He mixes the satisfaction of our desires with the performance of His intention. So people feel we are something of a success—of course a very nice one, but we *are* lucky and religion is something that the ordinary man might well invest in—it pays. Then that goes and we fall back on a less obvious aim—we have to comfort ourselves that at least we are resigned and are growing in virtue through the way we accept our failure. And then that goes, too. Like Job, the soul has to yield its last desperate cry, 'I will not let mine integrity go from me' and can only mutter 'Yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' For at the worst in the deepest darkness the polar facts remain. God is and nothing that can happen to my fortunes alters the facts which show deductively that the Supreme Being exists. And the other fact is that I have a will. Though that will may produce no results, I can keep on making acts with it. My holding on to my intention or my surrender of my intention, those two facts have really no more to do with whether I succeed in carrying out my will than has the existence of God to do with whether He comes to my aid at the time and in the way that would soothe my feelings. It seems clear, then, that Thomas Aquinas' saying is true and apt. It is hard, but it is the precise answer to the pressing question, the most pressing question in the whole of life, 'How shall I love God ?'

"Prema, the love of God, is very difficult of attainment. Sri Chaitanya had it. In the love of God, one forgets all outward objects, the universe, even one's own body, usually so dear to one ..."

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

# INDIA AND FRANCE

BY LOUIS RENOU

(Continued from the February issue)

## II

We must go back for a summary survey of the progress of French learning after the death of Burnouf. For about twenty years scholarship marked time, in spite of two or three productions of great merit. In Germany this period between 1850 and 1870 was decisive, tremendous progress being made in most branches of Indian studies.

It is only in the years immediately following the war of 1870, with the desire for regeneration called forth by defeat, that we see a brilliant resumption of study in our country. The establishment of the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes* at the Sorbonne was intended to give France a research institution comparable with the seminars which had been the strength of the German universities. Valuable philological work, Kaccayana's Pali grammar translated by Senart and the *Bhāṣinivāsa* translated by Bergaigne, date from that time. Barth's description of the *Religions de L'Inde*—merely an item for a dictionary—is an attempt, which has not yet been improved upon, to summarize the whole religious development of the country, omitting no factual detail and yet, with all that detail, preserving the synthetic character of the work. Even today, seventy years later, this handbook can still be usefully consulted. Barth, who wrote no other book or lengthy article, had an unusual and, one might also say, paradoxical career; by nothing more than summarizing and carrying on an active correspondence from continent to continent, he was able for forty years to exercise a sort of supervisory direction over our studies. All writers were concerned and anxious to submit the results of their work to him.

Bergaigne's magnum opus, *La Religion védique d'après les hymnes du Rgveda*, also dates from the eighties. It may be considered today that there is an arbitrary element in that work and that it is based on philological material to some extent outdated. Nevertheless, it remains the only comprehensive and systematic attempt up to our time, to grasp the very foundations of the speculative philosophy of the *Veda*, the essence of the thought of the old *rishis*. The romantic ideal of the primitive *Veda*, a sort of spontaneous adoration of natural phenomena, gives place to a learned religion, in which the mythical element is explained through ritual. The study of the heroic epochs of India thus loses its chief stronghold, but it must be allowed that the new interpretation appeals less to the imagination than the old. Since the time of Bergaigne, no other writer had had the courage to admit the undoubted beauties in the *Veda*.

On the other side of vedic literature, Paul Regnaud, who also did good work in the field of poetics, explained how the *Upanishads* were the preparation for the systematic philosophy of the *Darshanas*. Bergaigne's disciple, Victor Henry, continued the learned tradition of vedic studies.

On the other hand, Senart carried on the tradition of Burnouf. In his book on Buddha he endeavoured to show how much of the legend had become attached to the biography of the founder. He demonstrated that those legends were partly of vedic origin and partly common to Hinduism. The same scholar was also responsible for a great edition of the *Mahāvastu*, which is still unsurpassed. Al-



though he possibly gives too large a place to personal conjecture, Senart provides an example of the way in which the critical restoration of a text transmitted in imperfect form may be undertaken, in that particularly ill-defined linguistic region represented by 'Mixed Sanskrit' or 'Hybrid Sanskrit'. Lastly, a further and most important contribution made by this scholar is the first great interpretation of the body of Asoka's inscription, following the work of the first decipherers. All the considerable work which has been done in this field has consisted mainly of improving Senart's recensions and interpretations.

Lastly, a few years before his death in an accident, Bergaigne had had time to mark out a course which was to have pregnant consequences. French penetration into Indo-China had made possible the discovery of a vast quantity of epigraphic literature in Sanskrit in that country. Bergaigne began to classify it with a view to publication and, after his death, his work was completed by Barth and Senart. These old writings are evidence that Indo-Chinese civilization was derived from India and that Brahminic culture flourished in Indo-China in the first centuries of our era. This fact, important in itself, fell within the framework of still wider research, largely the work of French savants. Sinological research had taken a completely new lease of life at the end of the century with Chavannes, who was to be followed by Pelliot. Fifty years earlier, French scholars had been responsible for the discovery of the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Hsüen-Tsang, of inestimable value for the study of Indian history. The sinologists' work on Buddhism in the Far East, and the expeditions to Central Asia (the most famous was that which went to Tuen-Hwang in 1908, its full harvest has by no means yet been garnered)—the ultimate object of all that activity, whether conscious or not, was to restore India to the central place in Asiatic

history, as the link between the great civilizations, and the leaven of culture. The basis for the idea of Greater India, on which emphasis is so rightly laid by U. N. Ghoshal and other Indian scientists, was to a large extent laid by these exploring scholars, ceaselessly devoted to the task of discovering the ancient history of India, from the starting point of China, Tibet, or South-East Asia. The attraction of the North West Frontier regions, through which all the invading hordes had passed, can be similarly explained. Foucher's research on *L'art greco-bouddhique du Gandhara* introduced a new chapter in the history of art, to be supplemented later by his study of Buddhist iconography. The third generation of French students of India is represented by Foucher, Finot, and Sylvain Levi. Foucher, the only surviving member of the group, is not only noted for his archaeological work and for his historical research concerning North-West India in Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian times: he is also a philologist familiar with the methods of the *shastra*, and with a thorough knowledge of the *nyaya* and *karya*. Thanks to his elegant style, he is a master of popular exposition. Finot, who died in 1935, made his reputation by the careful editing of texts and learned studies of Sanskrit epigraphy in Cambodia. He was a conscientious scholar, careful not to deal in hypotheses or make statements unsupported by textual evidence.

Sylvain Levi, who also died in 1935, and who will probably be remembered by many of you (his last journey to India was as recent as 1928) was the most famous of our research workers since Burnouf. His written works are as spacious as they are varied, and yet by no means give a complete picture of him as man or scholar, nor of the charm and critical alertness of his mind, his linguistic gifts and his qualities of heart. Only the dullest could be unresponsive to his glowing personality and inspiring ideas. How can I

sum up in a few words his contribution to our knowledge? His early career seemed to foreshadow that of a classical student of Indian civilization, with the *Theatre Indien*, the first attempt to give a complete description of Sanskrit drama from the point of view of dramatic theory, dramatic practice, and literary history. Secondly, there was the small book on the *Brahmanas*, the legacy of Bergaigne's ideas; in that book, Sylvain Levi showed that the only true divinity in those texts was sacrifice and that a sort of 'totalitarian' doctrine (as we should call it today) had been built up around and for sacrifice. Sylvain Levi's expedition to India in 1897 overshadowed the famous expeditions of Buhler, Peterson, and Kielhorn, in the importance of manuscripts discovered, as the German, Leumann, himself admits. Thus, by force of circumstances as well as by vocation, Levi became the historian and philologist of Buddhism. The importance attributed to Buddhism is a characteristic of French scholarship as a whole. It may be considered exaggerated; Indian humanism is in no way connected with Buddhism, and Indian spiritual philosophy has few links with it. So far as antiquity is concerned, however, it is only through an interest in Buddhism that the history of India can be profitably approached and that India can be drawn out of her 'splendid isolation'; this was Sylvain Levi's primary concern. Thus he was led to begin the study of Buddhism in the North on a comparative basis, i.e. by dealing concurrently with Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese. This method bore fruit in India itself in the work of P.L. Bagechi, who was Sylvain Levi's favourite Indian pupil, and in that of many others. In France the work was continued, in particular, by Przyluski, who died prematurely a few years ago. He had endeavoured to trace the *Legend of the Emperor Asoka* from Indian and Chinese sources, and also to define the development of the Buddhist sects in his book on the *Council*

of *Rajagriha*.

Other aspects of Indian studies were not neglected, however. Masson-Oursel summarized the *Histoire de la Philosophie Indienne* and laid the foundation for a comparative study of philosophy in which, for the first time, oriental thought took its rightful place. Lacote studied with exemplary care the Nepali and Kashmiri versions of the *Brihatkatha*, in an attempt to fix the shifting image of Gunadhya and the original *Brihatkatha*. In linguistics, at the instigation of Breal in the first place and later, and principally, of Meillet, French learning bore comparatively rich fruit. The application of the method of comparative study to Indian languages has proved fruitful since Jules Bloch first described the structure of a modern language in his book *La formation de la langue marathe*, or, at a later date, traced the whole development of the languages derived from Sanskrit in his general treatise, *L'indo-aryen du Veda aux temps modernes*.

I do not wish to deal in detail with the work done. Elsewhere I have given a summary of the most recent work, that of the last ten years. Probably these works are not comparable, either in number or in the wide scope of many of them, with those produced by German scholars. Indian studies in Germany, however, inspired from the earliest days by the fever of Romanticism, were always effectively supported by the Government. Up to the war, Sanskrit was taught in all German universities. In our country, efforts have been made in vain to secure for oriental studies an adequate number of Chairs, made ever more necessary by the growth of research. During the last century an attempt was made by Victor Duruy, a Minister of Education, to introduce the rudiments of Indian history into the syllabus of secondary schools. He failed. Almost all work is still concentrated in Paris. At the Sorbonne, there is a Chair of Indian Literature. At the *College de France*, there is the Chair

of Sanskrit which was held by Burnouf, Bergaigne, and Sylvain Levi. Lastly, at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*, several posts known as *directions d'etudes* are connected with the study either of Indian philology or the history of religions. Outside Paris there is only one Chair of Sanskrit and Comparative Grammar (to use the now very much outdated title), at Lyons. Very recently, almost one might say surreptitiously, a Chair of Oriental Philosophy has been established at Lille. The *Institut de Civilisation Indienne*, founded at the Sorbonne in 1928 under the honorary presidency of Emile Senart, is not an independent teaching establishment. It is a working centre for those interested in India, preferably in the 'classical' aspects of Indian civilization. It is the scene of many of the lectures and courses provided by the University or the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*. In it we have a valuable library consisting mainly of gifts or purchases from the private libraries of Senart, Finot, Sylvain Levi, and Krishnavarma. The Gackwar of Baroda's donation enables us to maintain our collections, or at least to supply the most immediate needs. For a long time we have been organizing weekly lectures, in which we deal with problems of Indian study likely to attract the interest of a wider public than the private courses.

What can we do for young people in our country who wish to devote themselves to such study? The French Far Eastern College has its own needs and its own difficulties. It is often but a *pis aller* for the young student of Indian civilization. Today, when the scholars of Germany are—regrettably—reduced to silence, and Great Britain is only just beginning to reconstitute its staff of scientific workers, France might be in a favourable position, if the State understood how valuable may be the study of the fundamental culture of a people representing one-sixth of the population of the world. Cultural centres should be established in Calcutta and Madras

for example. Students from France would then be initiated in the work in India itself, and scholars from our country would co-operate with yours; in return, French teachers would deal with Western civilization. Why should not France create in India, as she has done at such expense in Rome, Athens, and Cairo, research institutes which would yield results at least equal to those of such renowned institutions?

We talk of closer links between India and France; speeches are made on the subject, yet nothing ever results. At the time of the *Mahabharata*, when the heroes had made eloquent speeches, they went on to action. The germ of closer relations is nevertheless present in the growing number of personal contacts. Let Indian assistants be attached to our universities and French assistants to yours. Let us exchange intellectual workers and we shall no longer need to talk about the value of closer links between the peoples.

However, we are no longer in the Romantic days and we shall not return to them. I have referred to the sort of cleavage there is between science and culture. Even a highly cultivated man can no longer be asked to follow the advances of modern chemistry. And the same is true in its own proportion as regards Indian studies. In France, however, the effect of the cleavage, if it exists, is reduced because in our country—more, I believe than elsewhere—the scholar has been careful to adapt the products of his knowledge to the requirements of a fairly large public. Popular textbooks and more or less useful treatises on the history of India, civilizations, and religions, abound. France is, however, the country of harmonious syntheses (at least it has been said so often that I am beginning to believe it); without too great a sacrifice of accuracy, our scholars find a means of interesting more than the small public of specialists. The works of Weber, Pischel, and Otto Franke, admirable as they are, are scarcely readable. All Burnouf's and

Senart's work, and much of Sylvain Levi's can be read by a person of culture. The *Histoire du Nepal* holds the attention like a good novel, and its author, who wrote *L'Inde et le monde*, that truly romantic book, with a sort of lyrical frenzy, dreamed of ending his career with a collection of Indian fairy tales for French children. Bergaigne was tempted to prepare a poetical version of *Shakuntala*. Senart described *Les castes de l'Inde* with elegance for the readers of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. In this way, some degree of contact has been preserved with that anonymous mass of readers in which a vocation may one day come to light.

Such contact should not, however, be sought at the expense of truth. It is always, to some extent, an abuse of power to give a decision on doubtful questions to the uninitiated public, particularly in a subject such as Indian studies, where so many problems await solution. It is all a question of proportion, however. What is frankly dishonest is to use India and Indian spiritual philosophy for the construction of idle and extravagant theories for Western illuminati. It must be admitted that in the abundance of its philosophical systems and the strangeness of certain concepts, Indian thought offered some temptation in this respect. The Neo-Buddhist sects and theosophical movements, which have multiplied so rapidly in the West, originated from Indian images and ideas in a more or less distorted form. The success of the lucubrations of such men as Rene Guenon,—those self-styled revelations of the Tradition which he believed is confided to him—are a sufficient indication of the danger. Such people claim to draw a distinction between the official or university study of Indian civilization, concerned, we are told, with grammar, and a type of Indian study which alone can penetrate the essence of things. Actually, it is a type of Indian study followed by superficial travellers or journalists, when it is not simply the work of exploiters of the public's

credulity, who imagine that they are teaching an ignorant audience about *Vedanta*, *Yoga*, or *Tantrism*.

All that is of little importance. Ultimately only honest and conscientious work survives. A useful, and possibly the most useful, part of such work is the translation of Indian writings. In the last century and a half many Sanskrit works have been translated into French. But there are few which do not require retranslation, either because the versions are inaccurate or because, being too accurate or not sufficiently skilful, they have failed to popularize the original and have thus not achieved their purpose. I shall not dwell on such inadequacies and gaps. I have dealt with them elsewhere. I shall simply mention here that *Shakuntala* and the *Mrichchhakatika* have been staged in France several times, not unsuccessfully, in spite of indifferent performance. A well-known poet, Gerard de Nerval, assisted in the adaptation for the stage of the *Little Clay Cart*.

Apart from Sanskrit works, very little—too little—has been done to make familiar in French the best of the Tamil writings as well as those in Hindi, Bengali or Marathi. We shall soon have a partial translation of the works of Tulsi Das. So far as contemporary work is concerned, rather more has been done, but not nearly enough. Several books by Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Sarat Chandra Chatterji and, recently, a sociological novel by Mulk Raj Anand, *Coolie*, have found readers in our country and have enjoyed success. Efforts in the last thirty years have naturally been concentrated on the works of Rabindranath Tagore, in whom we have appreciated the faithful reflection of all the tendencies of the Indian mind. Much of his work has been translated into French; a fine poet, Pierre Jean Jouve, assisted by Professor Kalidas Nag, has translated *The Swan*. Andre Gide, one of the foremost writers of our time, and himself a Nobel prize-winner, has translated *Post Office* and

*Gitanjali*. In his preface to the latter, he says, 'I have spent much longer time translating certain of these poems than Tagore spent writing them. It seemed to me that no thinker of modern times deserved more respect, I might almost say devotion, than Tagore. I took pleasure in humbling myself before him as he had humbled himself to sing before God.' One of our recognized critics, Thibaudet, also greeted *The Home and the World*, when it was published in French, with resounding praises.

Indian mystical theology found a genuinely interested mind in the philosopher Bergson, who tried to define the characteristics of Indian mysticism in contradistinction to Christian mysticism. Bergson was familiar with the ancient writings in the English versions, while for modern movements he referred to the works of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, which have been translated into French, as have the works of Aurobindo, Gandhi, and a few others, in the last few years.

The names I have just mentioned prompt a reference to their biographer, Romain Rolland. Romain Rolland did more than anyone to disseminate the doctrines of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the Western worlds. He was able to link them with the doctrines of ancient India from which they are derived and, through them, to popularize Indian thought. Those lyrical works, to which may be added the same author's book on Gandhi, are in the tradition of romantic writings. It

is principally owing to them, I think, that Romain Rolland has been regarded in India as the most representative of contemporary French authors. In fact, his career shows this paradox: that he has been recognized almost everywhere as a great European writer, without being recognized in France as a great French writer. He lacked the gift of style and a certain indefinable feeling for proportion, I might almost say, tact, which would have enabled him to claim that title. In the present connexion, however, it is true that Romain Rolland has been the most successful worker, in the spiritual sphere, for a closer union between India and France. I can find no more fitting close to this study than to evoke his memory.

Not only is France, like all other Western nations, a civilized country from the material point of view, as much as, and possibly more than any other, it is a country in which intellectual values, the heritage of classical antiquity, and Christianity, have been preserved with their pristine force. In spite of decline, France is a home of literature, art, and philosophic thought. How could she fail to acknowledge the splendour of Indian culture, as she did previously, when the treasures of India's past first met her gaze?\*

(Concluded)

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## MIND IN HORMIC PSYCHOLOGY

By DR P. T. RAJU

### I

There seems to be a general opinion among many psychologists, particularly in India, that Hormic psychology does the greatest justice to mental life, and that the

other schools are more or less mechanistic and blind, either for methodological or philosophical reasons, to all the peculiarities of mental life. Again, there are some who, because of the claim of Hormic psychology

to supply the most adequate basis for philosophy,<sup>1</sup> maintain that Indian psychology should be interpreted in terms of the former. Their opinion led me to re-think the doctrines of this school for some time in comparison with those of other schools, and I propose here to express some of my views on this school, though discussion of the Indian theories would be out of place here.

The choice of the term 'mental life' is in accordance with the tendency that treats psychology as a biological science instead of as a subject that exists by its own right. The use of the word 'mind' may raise metaphysical problems of the relation of mind and body, namely, whether mind is a substance or a relation, and the like, in which a modern psychologist with his empirical leanings is not interested, and which he much likes to avoid. McDougall, the founder of Hormic psychology, is himself explicit on this point. He writes: 'Modern psychology has, rightly and inevitably, become a branch of biological science.'<sup>2</sup> 'The psychology we need must, then, regard man as an organism among others, all whose actions, inspected in both inner and outer aspects, have in all respects the appearance of instances of teleological causation.'<sup>3</sup>

The central principle of Hormic psychology is that mental life is purposive. The admission of purpose into psychological explanations, it is said, makes Hormic psychology dynamic; while many of the other schools adopt mechanistic explanations and treat mind as a machine, which in itself is static. Mental energy is hormic energy, which is directed towards a goal, and all explanations of mental activity should therefore be teleological.

Hormic psychology is essentially a psychology based upon the theory of instincts.

Whether or not these instincts originated out of a single force or energy, and how, is not a main problem, and no attempt is made to give the explanations of the several aspects of mental life in terms of that force. Indeed, expressions like conative force and subservience of cognitive functions to the conative are used; but interpretations by this school are not offered in terms of some single conation or conative force. They are in terms of instincts and their concomitants. These instincts are spoken of as energies with natural goals. McDougall writes: 'To the Question—Why does a certain animal or man seek this or that goal? it replies: Because it is his nature to do so. This answer, simple as it may seem, has deep significance.' 'For any one species the kinds of goals sought are characteristic and specific; and all members of the species seek these goals independently of example and prior experience of attainment of them, though the course of action pursued in the course of striving towards the goal may vary much and may be profoundly modified by experience. We are justified, then, in inferring that each member of the species inherits the tendencies of the species to seek goals of these several types.'<sup>4</sup> The instinct is defined as 'an innate disposition which determines the organism to perceive (to pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which find expression in a specific mode of behaviour in relation to that object.'<sup>5</sup> That is, for all instincts the kind of objects towards which they are directed are fixed.

The most essential facts for Hormic psychology are: '(a) that the energy manifestation is guided into channels such that the organism approaches its goal; (b) that this guidance is effected through a cognitive activity, an awareness, however vague, of the present situation and of its goal; (c) that

<sup>1</sup> Carl Murchison: *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Materialism*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> McDougall: *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 110.

the activity, once initiated and set on its path through cognitive activity, tends to continue until the goal is attained; (d) that, when the goal is attained, the activity terminates; (e) that progress towards and attainment of the goal are pleasurable experiences, and thwarting and failure are painful or disagreeable experiences.<sup>6</sup> Here we are introduced to two elements of our mental life besides instinct, viz cognition and feeling. Whether cognition is, for McDougall, part of instinct or is different, it is difficult to say. Sometimes he says one thing, and at other times suggests the other. Indeed, he is definite about their inseparability.<sup>7</sup> But a profounder question about the hormic viewpoint is whether the instinct itself is, or develops into, intelligence, or whether there is a cognitive factor besides the instinct factor. There is a third possibility also, namely, that intelligence is a product of instinct. In his *Social Psychology* he writes: 'We may, then, define an instinct as an inherited psychological disposition which determines its possessor to perceive, and to pay attention to, objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at least, to experience an impulse to such action.'<sup>8</sup> We may not be wrong in understanding that the three, instinct, emotion, and cognition, are distinct elements. He speaks similarly in his *Outline* also.<sup>9</sup>

But he writes: 'Some degree of such adaptive capacity, however slight, seems to be inherent in all instinctive capacity.'<sup>10</sup> It would be unfair to say that McDougall is not distinguishing between instinct and intelligence in his *Energies of Men*. But it will

not be inappropriate to ask whether at the core of his thought the idea that intelligence is inherent in instinct and is therefore a part of it is not at work. McDougall speaks of cognitive dispositions. The implication is that the cognitive disposition is as instinctive as the instinct. McDougall warns us that a cognitive disposition is different from the disposition which is a factor of character,<sup>11</sup> but he says they are closely allied. He is, as it were, speaking of cognitive instincts and conative instincts. Yet he often tells us that cognition is inherent in instinct. Writing with the avowed purpose of making conation the chief characteristic of mind, it is no wonder that McDougall is now and then using such language. The phrase cognitive disposition betrays him.

When mental life becomes more and more complex, when primary instincts come into mutual conflict, and when instinctive activity requires great adaptability, intelligence becomes manifest, either by growing out of instinct or, if it is treated as a cooperative factor, independently.

Emotions and instincts are coordinate factors. All the primary instincts have their coordinate primary emotions. Even the secondary instincts have their derived emotions, though McDougall is not quite successful in discovering a complete list of them.

Every state of advanced mind has to be explained in terms of instincts. First, habit is determined by instinct. James thought that all instincts were transitory. While they last they determine the formation of habits, in whose favour they efface themselves. And even when habits are not formed they pass away. McDougall considers James to be in the wrong. For him instincts are not transitory, as evidenced by the behaviour of wild birds which, though hatched and brought up in captivity, can fly easily when released. A species is most completely characterized by

<sup>6</sup> *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 378.

<sup>10</sup> *The Energies of Men*, i. 40.

<sup>11</sup> *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 352.

its instincts, all its peculiarities of form, colour, structure, function and habit being subservient to and determined by them.'<sup>12</sup> That is, instincts are never displaced by habits, and habits always remain subservient to instincts.

Even perception is impossible without a disposition. 'For every object which the subject can think of, he must possess a corresponding disposition, innate or acquired; and no amount of "extensity", postulated as inhering in "sensation", will enable the "sensations" to do the thinking or to find a meaning for themselves.'<sup>13</sup> Here thinking does not necessarily mean abstract thinking but also perception. For even in perception, unless we know what the object is, perception will not be complete. One may understand a cognitive disposition as corresponding in some way to a category of Kant. But it is not static or an 'idea'; it is to be understood as dynamic, conative. Of course McDougall differentiates between conative dispositions and cognitive dispositions. But the cognitive disposition does not come into play unless the conative disposition, which he uses synonymously for instinct,<sup>14</sup> begins to work. But if cognition is inherent in conation, we may say that cognitive disposition is inherent in conative disposition. However, whether different or identical, cognition cannot come into operation except in the service of conation. Attention, interest, imagining, memory are all to be similarly understood. Coming to the character side of mind, disposition is the sum total of man's instinctive tendencies.<sup>15</sup> Temper is the expression of the way in which the conative impulses work within man.<sup>16</sup> Temperament and mood are also expressive of the conative side of mental life. Belief and doubt are derived emotions produced by the

interplay of conation and cognition.<sup>17</sup> 'Belief is, then, confidence in the intellectual plane; and doubt is hesitation or anxiety on the same plane of explicitly formulated propositions.'<sup>18</sup> 'All these are eminently cognitive processes; hence the purely intellectualistic accounts of belief that have commonly been accepted. But notice now, that, as in all thinking, the conative factor plays an essential part in each of these processes.'<sup>19</sup> Reasoning also is fundamentally based on conation. 'The essence of all reasoning is that judgment and a new belief are determined by beliefs already established in mind. If the old beliefs are true and the reasoning process correct then the new belief is true and becomes an effective guide to action.'<sup>20</sup> Character is the system of directed conative tendencies. The units of character are the sentiments or complexes. These two are alike except that the latter is morbid. 'The essential nature of a sentiment, the scheme or plan of it, is then, a mental system in which a cognitive ability (in the older terminology, an 'idea') has become, through the individual's experience, functionally linked with one or more native propensities, linked in such a way that, when the ability comes into play (that is, when the corresponding object is perceived or otherwise thought of) the propensity also is brought into action and engenders its peculiar emotional tendency directed upon the object.'<sup>21</sup> 'Disposition, temper, and temperament are raw materials of personality provided by heredity.'<sup>22</sup> In his *Energies of Men* McDougall adds character and intellect.

Intellect also develops similarly. The cognitive structure of the human mind consists of a vast number of dispositions, each for a particular object or a class of objects,

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

<sup>21</sup> *The Energies of Men*, p. 223.

<sup>22</sup> *Outline of Psychology*, p. 359.



which the mind can conceive in either of the following ways—perceiving, remembering, expecting or imagining. These dispositions form systems of systems until all comprise one total tree-like structure.<sup>23</sup> Cognition does not begin with particulars. ‘The advance of intellect is from knowledge of a few objects of a very high general type, towards a knowledge of a multitude of concrete individual objects and their peculiar qualities and relations.’<sup>24</sup> An animal knows fewer objects than man, because its cognitive dispositions are fewer. But in man these dispositions differentiate themselves and grow and hence his superiority to animals. The process of growth is of three different kinds—discrimination, apperception, and association. Discrimination increases the number of cognitive dispositions. For instance, the child who first reacts to all objects alike, learns to react differently to different kinds of objects by discriminating between good and bad, painful and pleasant, eatable and uneatable, and so forth. These

differentiations of the mental structure by discrimination are brought together or synthesized by apperception.<sup>25</sup> The two processes, discrimination and apperception, together constitute mind’s logical structure. Through them mind understands the logical relations between things. But it gets its historical knowledge, which is a knowledge of the relations of time and place, through association.

This, in brief, is the scheme of Hormie psychology, by the persistent endeavours of which to interpret mind as essentially and primarily conative none can be left unimpressed. It has been made brilliantly systematic by McDougall; and its popularity, because of its appeal to commonsense, is very great. People with misgivings of mechanistic explanations of mental behaviour, but unable to propound a method which would satisfy the scientific spirit, welcomed it enthusiastically. They felt that mind was saved and that spirituality could find a psychological support.

*(To be continued)*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 380.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 382.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 386.

## SHELLEY AND VEDANTA

By P. K. ANANTANARAYAN

*(Continued from the February issue)*

### VI. THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN LIFE

In our study of human life we are confronted with many complex problems whose intricacy has baffled the utmost effort of human thought to solve satisfactorily. Great thinkers and philosophers of all ages have devoted their whole life to find a clue to these intriguing puzzles. We meet with innumerable contradictions in life, how to reconcile them? In what manner do the senses, mind and will act upon the soul, and how does it react? How to explain the existence of so

much of sin and evil, suffering and misery, among mankind in a world governed by a just Divine Power? We shall try to give an answer to these complicated questions as far as we can trace them in Shelley’s poetry.

It may be mentioned that Shelley’s view of life was powerfully influenced by the circumstances of the time, especially the volcanic movement of the French Revolution and its doctrines on his sensitive mind. An idealist and dreamer by temperament, he

was inspired with a burning passion to reform mankind. Freedom was the life-breath of his being, which, on the one hand, roused his fierce antagonism to social shams and conventions, and old customs and traditions, and on the other hand, made him champion the cause of democracy and republican movement in the countries of Europe. In one word, his ideal was the unity and brotherhood of mankind.

To begin with, life is an enigma and in a constant state of flux :

'Man's yesterday may never be like his  
morrow,  
Nought may endure but Mutability.'  
—(*Mutability*)

The *advaitin* declares that the world has no existence, meaning thereby that it has no absolute, unchangeable existence; it exists only in relation to our mind, as perceived by our senses. In the words of Shelley :

'In this life  
Of error, ignorance and strife,  
Where nothing is, but all things seem  
And we the shadows of the dream,' etc.  
—(*Sensitive Plant IV*)

The explanation offered by Vedanta to solve the innumerable riddles and contradictions we meet with in life is the theory of *Maya*. As the *Upanishad* proclaims. 'Know Nature to be *Maya*, and the Ruler of the *Maya* is the Lord Himself.' This theory is only a simple statement of facts as they exist in the universe, what we are and what we see around us. Vedanta admits that this world is a mixture of good and evil, happiness and misery, and the cause of our *avidya* or ignorance is a kind of mist that intervenes between us and Truth. Man clings to the body and the senses, though he knows full well that our beauty, our wealth, our power, our virtue etc. will soon come to an end. In the midst of this ever-changing world nothing is real, nothing is permanent. Shelley is in perfect agreement with this theory of *Maya*, as applied to the world in general :

'This whole  
'Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts  
and flowers,  
With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
Is but a vision ;—all that it inherits  
Are notes of a sick eye, bubbles and  
dreams ;  
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
The Future and the Past are idle shadows  
Of thoughts' eternal flight—they have  
no being !  
Nought is but that which feels itself to be.'  
—(*Hellas*)

The same theory, as applied to the workings of the human mind and their application to the actions of men in their dealings with their fellow-creatures, finds lofty expression in these lines :

'They dare not devise good for man's estate,  
And yet they know not that they do not  
dare,  
The good want power, but to weep barren  
tears.  
The powerful goodness want : worse need  
for them.  
The wise want love : and those who love  
want wisdom.  
And all best things are thus confused to ill.'  
—(*Prometheus I*)

This never-ceasing opposition among the virtues themselves possessed by man and the lack of balance and strength resulting from it, the divergence between potential desire and actual fulfilment, are all manifestations of the working of *Maya* in human life.

The soul, though it is of divine origin and essence, is encased in the body, and it has to work in and through the senses and the mind. The senses are the windows of the mind, through which it comes in contact with the external world and gains all knowledge. The mind is the seat of understanding and the conscious will ; and it forms ideas from the data furnished to it by the five senses, and also permits the execution of all actions that

the will may command. Thus the soul, through the organs to which it is bound by ignorance, becomes the doer and enjoyer ; but it always remains apart from them in their daily activities, as a perceiver or passive spectator. As long as the soul is imprisoned in the body, and is subjected to the many *upadhis* or limitations laid on it by the senses, its real nature, its omniscience, and omnipotence, become latent, though it remains uncontaminated by them. It is like the lotus leaf, which, while it is born out of the mire and lives always surrounded by water, yet remains untouched by the water.

Though the senses have a natural tendency to enslave the human mind by making it a victim of all sorts of worldly temptations and pleasures and desires, which act as a clog on the spiritual development of the soul, we have a potent weapon in the shape of thought and will, which can fight with, and overcome them. With his boundless faith in the power of thought he makes one of his important personages exclaim :

‘Methinks I grow like what I contemplate.’  
—(*Prometheus* I) Similarly, as regards the deadening effect of the blind observance of custom upon character, he remarks :

‘Custom maketh blind and obdurate  
The loftiest hearts.’—(*Laon*)

Again, referring to the powerful nature of the workings of mind and thought he asks :

‘Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek  
But in our own mind ?’

—(*Julian and Maddalo*)

The just combination of right thinking and proper exercise of the will is capable not only of eliminating our evils and shortcomings, but to attain the conquest of the self :

‘Man alone

Remains, whose will has power when all  
beside is gone ;’

and ‘Yet am I king over myself, and rule

The torturing and conflicting throngs  
within.’ (*Laon* ; and *Prometheus*. I)

We next come to another crucial problem

of human life, which has puzzled philosophers and religious teachers of all the ages. How are we to account for the existence of such a mass of evil, sin, and suffering in the world, and what is the remedy ? The Vedantist, accepting the theory of *Maya*, takes the existence of good and evil in the world for granted. But he maintains that the world is not all good or all evil, but a mixture of both. His position is that wherever there is good there must also be evil ; wherever there is happiness, there must be misery, for are they not, after all, different manifestations, the obverse and the reverse, of the same principle ? Shelley is quite aware not only of the existence of both good and evil, but of the power inherent in each.

The power and persistence of evil and its corrupting influence over others find forceful expression in number of poems : ‘He who is evil can receive no good ;’ ‘Evil minds change good to their own nature ;’ ‘All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil.’ Similarly, the potent character of good and virtue is revealed in the words : ‘To the pure all things are pure ;’ ‘Men might be immortal were they sinless.’ While recognizing the realities of pain and evil and crime revealed in Nature and in society, he yet believed that ‘evil is not inherent in the system of creation but an accident that might be expelled.’ In the opinion of the poet, if we could only pierce to the core of things, if we could but be what we are capable of being, the world and man could both attain perfection, so as to be able to expel evil from his own nature and from the greater part of creation. He strikes a very optimistic note in one of his statements that ‘Mankind had only to will that there should be no, and there would be none.’ What is our duty under the circumstances ? ‘Is it not wise to make the best of ill ?’ because our evil is of no less value than our good, as they are bound together. We should try our best to lessen the misery we see around us, which is the only way to



patiently and uncomplainingly all this crucifixion at the hands of the all-powerful and evil-minded tyrant. When he is entreated to repeat a curse he had pronounced on his enemy long ago, he calmly and gently declares :

‘I wish no living thing to suffer pain.’

It is impossible to imagine a more sublime illustration of the virtue of non-violence than Prometheus, the Christ-like sufferer, who will not retaliate or even wish the slightest ill to his cruel persecutor.

#### VII. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

In a world torn by factions and dissensions, moved by mutual jealousies and rivalries, and actuated by greed and selfishness, among the several peoples and nations, where is the poet-philosopher to look for light and guidance, in the midst of the enveloping gloom, to illumine the path that leads to the goal of universal peace and happiness? Like many another wise man, Shelley thought he had found the key to solve the problems of human life in Love. The central theme that runs through many of his poems is the need for Love, the power and efficacy of Love, both in the case of the individuals and the nations, for the salvation of mankind. He was convinced that it is only through Love, spiritual love, a symbol of the Divine, that the unity of mankind can be attained and the progress of the world can be maintained. In a moment of crisis the hero Prometheus declares : ‘I feel most vain all hope but love.’ In another connection he solemnly proclaims : ‘Love is the sole law which should govern the moral world.’

Is it ever possible, the question might be legitimately asked, except in the imagination of the poet, for Love so to permeate human society as to promote the regeneration of mankind? Shelley emphatically answers in the affirmative, because he had implicit faith in the perfectibility of man. ‘Every heart contains perfection’s germ,’ and ‘All things tend to perfection through love;’ This is

his unequivocal assertion. This is almost an echo of the words of Swami Vivekananda : ‘Each soul is potentially divine, and the goal is to manifest this divinity already in man.’ Believing as he does in the potential divinity in man, he asks with poignant insight :

‘Why is this noble creature to be found  
One only among thousands? What one is  
Why may not mankind be?’

The goal of human life, as envisaged by all the great religions, is the attainment of salvation, the realization of God. Vedanta unhesitatingly proclaims that the road leading to salvation is a hard and steep and thorny one, and only sound knowledge and a hard-won progress in virtue will enable us to tread that path with confidence. There are steps to Realization, sure and unfailing steps, prescribed by the wise seers and saints and sages, tried and tested in their own pure lives and by the fire of their own experience. The first step is true and tremendous faith in God and a burning desire to reach Him. This implies an intense desire to be free, free from the bondage of the senses and the mind. All knowledge and all perfection being already latent in the soul, our endeavour should only be to take the veil of *Maya* off and let the soul manifest itself in its pristine purity and realize its identity with the one indivisible *Brahman*, comprehending all things in itself.

Shelley was imbued with an unquenchable thirst from his boyhood for higher things, which impelled him to seek spiritual light, as prescribed in *Jnana Yoga* or the Path of Wisdom :

‘There is one road

To peace and that is Truth, which follow  
ye!’—(*Julien and Maddalo*)

Fully realizing that the mind is a slave to pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, we have to discriminate between what is true and false, transitory and eternal. This can be achieved only by perfect self-control and self-discipline, the curbing of the contending passions in the heart :

'Man who man would be  
Must rule the empire of himself ;  
In it must be supreme ; establishing his throne  
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.'

—(*Political Greatness*)

When self-control enables us to eliminate our  
evil passions and strengthen our good emotions,  
it naturally results in that rare state of  
contentment and serenity of mind, which we  
long for :

'Me within whose soul sits peace serene  
As light in the sun, crowned ;'

—(*Prometheus I*)

and 'That content surpassing wealth  
The sage in meditation found  
And walked with inward glory crowned.'

—(*Written in Dejection*)

As the soul of man advances on the road to  
perfection, the path already becomes lighter  
and brighter :

'Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
Visit the soul in sleep.'—(*Mont Blanc*)

A life of purity, serenity, and discipline,  
achieved by a long course of *sadhana*, prayer  
and meditation, finally results in the blissful  
state of *samadhi*, the *summum bonum* of the  
Vedantin's quest :

'Entranced in some diviner mood

Of self-oblivious solitude.'—(*Daemon I*)

In the *Gita* also we read :

'For supreme happiness comes to the Yogin  
whose mind is at rest, whose passions are  
composed, and who is pure and has become  
one with God.'

Two unique and memorable pictures of  
such realized souls or *jivanmuktas*, who yet  
remain in the body for some time as an  
example and inspiration to mankind, are given  
by Shelley in these passages :

'The azure night

Grew radiant with the glory of that form  
Which lives unchanged within, and his  
voice fell

Like music which makes giddy the dim  
brain,

Faint with intoxication of keen joy ;'

—(*Prometheus Unbound* 2-1)

and 'Custom, and Faith, and Power thou  
spurnest ;

From hate and awe thy heart is free ;

Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,

For dark and cold mortality

A living light, to cheer alone,

The watch-fires of the world among.'

—(*Daemon I*)

### VIII. PROPHETIC VISION

The last phase of our study of Shelley as  
a poet leads us to the conclusion that he was  
not only a philosopher but also a prophet. We  
have already referred to his being an idealist  
and dreamer, fired with a burning zeal for the  
reformation of society. His innate faith in  
the goodness of human nature, his belief in  
the perfectibility of man, and his insistence  
on spiritual love being the only solvent of  
many of the ills of the world, naturally made  
him hope that the betterment of the world  
can be brought about only with the regenera-  
tion of the hearts of men. That he took his  
calling as a poet very seriously and that he  
was not reluctant to don the robe of the  
prophet are quite evident in the two famous  
lyrical poems, *To a Skylark* and *Ode to the  
West Wind*, in which he apostrophizes these  
natural forces to inspire him with the power  
to touch the heart of mankind :

'Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow,

The world should listen then as I am  
listening now ;'

and 'Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is ;

.....  
And, by the incantation of this verse,  
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among  
mankind !

Be through my lips to unawakened earth  
The trumpet of a prophesy ! O, Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?  
In spite of the darkness, evil, and misery existing in the society, his mind often 'floats away into an imaginary Elysium or expected Utopia, and conjures up visions of the millennium, the dawn of the thousand years of peace and happiness, which, though impracticable in our own day, reveal divine truth at the heart of it. This prophetic vision is unfolded before us in two diverse matters, viz. his own untimely death and the Golden Age in the future.

The problem of Death exercised a terrible fascination on the mind of Shelley. Not only had he no fear of death, but he seemed to play with it. He would frequently contemplate on Death, and try to experiment on himself to test what would befall the soul after leaving the body. He was ready to face any danger to solve this mystery. In the concluding part of *Adonais*, the famous Elegy on the death of Keats, he foresees his own impending death with a rapture of prophecy, feels the divine fire 'consuming the last clouds of cold mortality,' and speaks that his 'Spirit's bark is driven, far from the shore, far from the trembling throng.' Here is a clear prognostication of his own end, which was actually fulfilled eighteen months later :

'I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;

Whilst, burning through the inmost veil  
of heaven,

The soul of Adonais, like a star,

Beacons from the abode where the  
Eternal arc.'

This very prophetic vision, which gifted him with the almost supernatural power to foresee his finding a watery grave, attains wider scope in delivering a message regarding the unity, progress, and regeneration of mankind. His advice to his fellowmen to achieve the moral and spiritual aim is : 'Let all be free and equal ;' 'Can man be free if woman be a slave ?' and 'Mankind were to be free, equal, and pure and wise.' In some of his poems we get pictures of :

'A nation

Made free by love ; a mighty brotherhood  
Linked by a jealous interchange of good.'

In another glowing account of a people, who are on the verge of being liberated from the oppression of a tyrannical ruler, he speaks of :

'The happy age

When truth and love shall dwell below

Among the works and ways of men,

Which on this world not power but will  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.'

—(*Rosalind and Helen*)

The imagination of Shelley was so impregnated with the possibility of realizing the Golden Age in this world by the united efforts of human beings that it passed far beyond the realm of vision and became almost a reality. The faith of idealists of all ages is agreed on affirming that in his attempt at moral regeneration through love and endurance, the soul of man will have the active sympathy and co-operation of the soul of Nature. In *Prometheus Unbound*, the condition of Man after the victory of the hero over the forces of Evil is described as one of unity in diversity, and complete emancipation transcending all barriers of race and colour, class and creed, imposed on society by human agencies :

'Man remains

Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man

Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless.

Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king

Over himself ; just, gentle, wise' etc.

Lastly, Shelley's belief in the glorious future awaiting the destiny of mankind finds categorical expression in lines, 'which mirror gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present.' In the first stanza of the concluding Chorus of the lyrical drama of *Hellas*, Shelley voices forth his belief in the glorious future awaiting the destiny of mankind :

'The world's great age begins anew,

The golden years return,

The earth doth like a snake renew

Her winter weeds outworn ;  
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires  
 gleam.  
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.'

#### IX. CONCLUSION

Having briefly surveyed one aspect of Shelley's poetry, viz. the vedantic basis of his philosophy, or rather the close affinity his philosophy bears to Vedanta, I shall conclude this essay by touching upon an interesting point that has often tickled my curiosity. How is it that, of all English poets, Shelley's poetry should exhibit such unexpected originality and remarkable resemblance to vedantic doctrines? Heredity and environment are considered as potent factors in moulding a man's thoughts and character. But as far as we know, though born in a family of great antiquity and considerable wealth, Shelley inherited neither poetical genius nor his philosophic bent of mind from any of his ancestors. Again, neither the atmosphere of his home nor the educational institutions he attended were congenial to the development of his unique life and character. His own reading and study are not likely to have brought him in touch with vedantic literature, because in the early years of the nineteenth century there was no chance of such literary or philosophic contact between India and

England. Shelley was no doubt a student and admirer of Plato and Spinoza, but their influence cannot explain the extent and depth of philosophic knowledge, akin to Vedanta, that is revealed in his poetry.

How, then, are we to offer an adequate interpretation of this literary phenomenon? That he might have obtained all this knowledge by his power of intuition is true only within certain limits. To remark that it is merely a freak of genius is simply evading the issue. To us, who believe in the doctrine of reincarnation, one possible, nay the only probable, solution offers itself. I am afraid it might be regarded as too far-fetched, fantastic, and chimerical, if I were to suggest that the soul of Shelley, which might have inhabited the body of some wise saint or sage in its previous life in India, was born in an aristocratic English family to work out its *karma* in the world, viz. to shed its spiritual light and illumine many aspiring souls in the West, and thus bring about harmony between the East and the West in the quest of Divine Truth. In the absence of a more valid and edifying explanation, the one offered by me may not after all be quite unjustifiable, for mysterious are the ways and workings of Providence, and 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.'

(Concluded)

#### THE SEER-FLAME

*Manthata narah kavimadvayantam prachetasam amritam supratikam  
 Yajnasya ketum prathamam purastad agnim naro janayata sushevam*  
 —Gathina Vishvamitra, *Rigveda*, III. 29.5

Churn the Depths to light the Flame,  
 Ye Toilers bold !  
 The Seer-Flame—  
 That flickers not while rising to the One Supreme,  
 And illumines the Paths



Along His onward march ;  
 The deathless Flame—  
 Converging into a calyx of lightning-thrills.

Of Sacrifice the prime effulgent Ray is He—  
 The leaping Flame  
 That ever moves to greet the Sun !  
 Engender Him, ye Toilers bold,—  
 The wondrous Flame  
 That steeps your Soul in radiance of Shiva's Bliss !  
 (Translated by Anirvan)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Hormic psychology developed by McDougall has a great vogue today and is enthusiastically hailed by many as a message of redemption. In the last century as well as in the early years of the present, science in all its branches was ruled by the mechanistic conception of Newtonian physics. Any department of knowledge which claimed the prestige of science adhered to that conception for explaining the facts which formed the field of its study. This was true of biology and psychology also. But as research, particularly in these fields, made progress it became increasingly evident that not all the facts could be adequately accounted for in mechanistic terms. Biology developed its own peculiar concepts by which to explain many of its otherwise unaccountable findings. Hormic psychology, like various psycho-analytic schools, represents this reaction in the mental field. It gave up mechanism and sought explanation of mental facts in terms of purpose or instincts which are many and inherent in a species. This not only seemed far more satisfying to the science itself but apparently

held out hope to the human heart that loathed to be reduced to a mere deterministic movement of matter. Whether or not mind so conceived is still adequate to explain all the experiences and ideals of man is a different question. We believe it is not. However, it is doubtless a step forward from the position which seeks to explain things that are higher in terms of phenomena that are lower.

Dr P. T. Raju of the Andhra University subjects Hormic psychology to a critical analysis and examines its claim to be regarded as a complete and sufficient explanation of the vast structure of our ideas and ideals. In short he examines the question, whether or not mental study should be put on a level higher than the biological, for Hormic psychology fails to maintain a clear distinction between man and animal, ideal and instinct. But it is clear, he points out, that we cannot truly succeed in reducing ideal to instinct. In the first part of his very interesting and scholarly article *Mind in Hormic Psychology* which appears in this issue he summarizes the principles of Hormic psychology. In the second half (which will appear next month) he will offer his criticisms.

### PROF. LOUIS RENOU ON SANSKRIT

We referred in the note on *Reflections on the National Language Question* in our last February issue to 'veiled antagonism to Sanskrit in certain quarters,' which makes our future heavy with foreboding. But the antagonism is not merely veiled, for it is clearly open also in different parts of India. This can only be explained as due to ignorance of what Sanskrit and the culture it represents mean. We very much wish that competent persons who realize the deep and abiding value of Sanskrit should join their voices in telling the people who do not know the tremendous practical consequences of the study of Sanskrit. They should not rest till Sanskrit is accorded the place it deserves in our scheme of education.

We have often regretted the practice of judging Indian ideas and Indian things in terms of partial notions of the West. Sanskrit is a victim of such habits. We hardly find in current print all that can be forcefully and rightly said in its favour, and all that will show it to be a language unique in character, richness, vitality, and future possibilities. But since what the West speaks to us about ourselves often makes a greater appeal than what we ourselves say, it is profitable to draw general attention to its utterances.

Prof. Louis Renou of the University of Paris, whose valuable article on *India and France* we have been enabled to publish in our last and current issues, enjoys wide renown as a Sanskrit scholar of the first rank. Speaking on the significance of Sanskrit studies in the Annamalai University in Madras, Prof. Renou is reported in the daily press to have made the following observations :

India is loved and respected in the world because it is the land possessing a long and honoured heritage. This heritage is preserved in the treasures of Sanskrit literature....

One cannot deny the importance of Tamil here, of Bengali in Calcutta, or of Marathi in Poona.

I know Tamil enjoys in the family of modern lan-

guages a unique character owing to the grand continuity of its literature. But Tamil is one of the many regional languages. The forms of expression which have given to Indians their unity, which have shaped their culture, belong to Sanskrit alone and to no other language.

In India Sanskrit is the basis of all religious, philosophic and scientific tradition which has made her what she is. In other words India possesses one of the best civilizations that still remain in the world. There may be Dravidian literature as we have Bengali or French literature. But there is no religious philosophy nor science with that denomination. Great savants like Shankaracharya and Ramanujacharya used Sanskrit. The very ancient Tamil works (especially in the field of philosophy) have also come under the healthy influence of Sanskrit, both in vocabulary and thought.

We sometimes hear that Sanskrit is the monopoly of a certain class (the Brahmins). Do you think that the epics, poetry, and fables, the *arthasastra*, the *ayurveda* and so many other technical sciences have any connection with the privileges of caste? Am I a Brahmin myself because I have devoted my life to these studies; and, do people want to say that the modern world does not need spiritual values and that material progress is their only concern?

I hear also that the fight against Sanskrit is necessary to circumvent the attempts of the people of the north who want to make Hindi the national language, but, if you are keen on avoiding Hindi (I cannot say whether you are right or wrong in doing so) the best alternative method is definitely to reinforce the position of Sanskrit. Sanskrit free from any Muslim influence, and in a broader sense from any influences foreign to India, must be accepted as the cultural language from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. It is not only the language of India par excellence, but it is also the Asiatic language. It is the Sanskrit culture, as you know, that through the help of Buddhism spread from Afghanistan and Tibet as far as China, Japan, and throughout the whole of South East Asia. (A.P.)

Prof. Renou has made brief but pointed reference to the value of Sanskrit for all Indians. Whether or not, Sanskrit can serve as a common cultural language for vast masses of Indians is a point which can be debated. But there can be no doubt that it can easily be made a compulsory language for most of the school students of India. Apart from this, it requires to be greatly encouraged in the Universities. Sanskrit will be found to be a source from which the provincial and the national languages will be able to draw endlessly for their development.

Raja Rammohun Roy, who cannot be accused of either reactionism or orthodoxy, and who was the most important single individual responsible for the introduction of English as a medium of University instruction in India, said more than a hundred and twenty years ago : 'If by that light of intelligence which we are said to have borrowed from the English is meant the introduction of the industrial machine, then I fully share this view, and I am ready to express our gratefulness for this. But I can never acknowledge that we are indebted to anybody in the matter of science, literature, or religion. For, the whole world is indebted to our forbears for that first dawn of knowledge which broke in the East—this can be proved from the evidence of history itself. By the grace of Saraswati we still possess a vast and rich philosophical literature, thanks to which we do not need, like other nations, to have recourse to others' languages to express our scientific and philosophical thoughts.'

Sanskrit will further help to establish the lost links of our civilization with its children all over Central and Eastern Asia. Its value as a deeper cultural support of the aspiration toward a political federation of the Asian nations, at least the vast majority of them, has hardly been widely and clearly realized.

All this apart, Sanskrit is essential for Indian unity. Prof Renou has referred to what has been in our day termed as linguism, that is to say, the plan to organize peoples as political units on a linguistic basis. India today shows lamentable evidence of oblivion of its fundamental principles of unity. The antagonism to Sanskrit in the South arises from social exclusiveness and the cure lies in a liberal social movement. The Aryan and Tamilian controversy is purest moonshine.

Such divisions are merely a matter of language and do not answer to any real difference, whether of race or culture. We are one in blood and culture, and the South has been in after ages a chief repository of authentic vedic tradition. The masses there require to be introduced to Sanskrit culture to elevate them to higher levels. If this is done they will easily reach the plane of those who as a class, have so long been giving themselves false airs of superiority, while, in fact, proclaiming the narrowness of their spirit. Indian unity rests on spiritual premises and will always rest on these principles. If we seek unity in any particular domain, whether it be political or economic, outside of these principles, such agreement will always remain highly unstable and precarious and much more like a diplomatic arrangement than a true understanding. Our recent past is replete with the debris of unworkable compromises born of political cerebration.

We should all of us, Hindus or Mohameds, Parsis or Christians, try to reach the common conceptions of our culture, our tradition, which cannot be contained in any expression, but of which all outward divergences are contingent expressions in terms of the peculiar and given differences in character, development, and aptitude of peoples. No faith, here or elsewhere, will live which will fail to broaden its basis in accordance with the truth of this Perennial Tradition.

Finally, it will be giving free rein to wild fantasies of all kinds to imagine that we can secure unity and peace and happiness by trying to copy the empirical and relative standards of a civilization that is fast turning its bottom upwards. Yet such fantasies seem, alas, at the back of nearly all our pronounced ideologies.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### THE WORLD AS IDEA, EMOTION, AND WILL.

By C. Jinanajadasa. *The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 85. Price Rs 2-12.*

This book is mainly a collection of some lectures delivered by the author in America, England, and India to audiences interested in Theosophy. A perusal of the book will show that the subject has been dealt with lucidly and is certain to hold the interest of the people to whom they were addressed.

These lectures are also good reading for non-Theosophists as well, barring, of course, those portions where he deals with Theosophical mysteries and deductions from them—as for example, the reference to re-incarnations of races and individuals (pp. 18-19), and the interpretation of the Hindu theory of sacrifice in chapter VI.

On p. 75 the author makes the strange remark that Christianity is 'a religion that arose completely independent of any teaching in this land of India.' Modern researches have shown more and more the great indebtedness of the teachings of Jesus to the *Bhagavad Gita* and Buddhism through religious organizations like the Essenes and the Theraputae. Surely the President of the Theosophical Society is not ignorant of these advances in modern research! In this connection Swami Vivekananda says: 'Before even the Buddhists were born, there are evidences accumulating every day, that Indian thought penetrated the world. Before Buddhism, Vedanta had penetrated into China, into Persia, and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Again, when the mighty mind of the Greek had linked the eastern parts of the world together, there came Indian thought; and Christianity with all its boasted civilization is but a collection of little bits of Indian thought. (Italics ours). Ours is a religion of which Buddhism, with all its greatness, is a rebel child, and of which Christianity is a very patchy imitation.'

Again, there is the tilting against Indian *sanyasis*, a performance dear to the heart of the enemies of Hinduism, whether Christians or non-Christians, and which unfortunately, some Hindu leaders even take up, due to their zeal to 'reform' Hinduism so as to make it acceptable to the eyes of Western critics whose good opinion seems such a precious commodity that it should be bought at all cost, even though it might involve a little mudslinging at their own innocent countrymen. It is true that Jinanajadasa agrees that there are a few hundreds of *sanyasis* here and there who are 'true gurus and through their intensely spiritual nature they do pour out healing, strength and blessing to the people.' But he condemns the rest of *sanyasis* as shirkers who should be put to work to earn their living, instead

of fattening upon the charity of the people. We wish the Government of India will invest Sri Jinanajadasa with this most desirable task. For does he not seem to understand the wheat from the chaff as regards spirituality? But we would also ask the Government of India to appoint one of these *sanyasis* to do the same task with regard to the members of the Theosophical Society. Then only we shall be in a position to discover the relative proportion of wolves in sheep's clothing among the Theosophists as well as the *sanyasis* of India, and the amount of good each group has been doing 'to the masses'.

On the whole, however, the book is stimulating and thought-provoking.

S. Y.

### GANDHI'S CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANITY:

By S. K. George; 2nd Indian Edition: Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad; Price Rs. 1/8/-; Pp XXI+93.

Since the dawn of her awakening, marked by the advent of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, India has proceeded step by step towards fulfilling her ancient mission of working out anew a synthesis of various religions and cultures on her soil helped by a galaxy of great personalities. Mahatma Gandhi, the drama of whose life was enacted in our own times, belongs in the same line. Hinduism, which is a way of life based upon universal and immutable principles and which represents a search after Truth and its application in life rather than a creedal religion, was exemplified best in the lives and works of these great men. And through them it reacted to the challenge of the various religions that came to India by accepting them and finding for them a niche in her vast mansion, housing all possible varieties of religious faiths.

By accepting and assimilating the best principles of these religions, the Hindus have, in their turn, thrown a challenge to them to show a truly catholic and universal spirit. This has set some of the genuine religious men of these faiths at thinking, who are trying to find their own place in the Indian life.

The author finds one such challenge to Christianity in the life of Gandhiji. He is a devout Gandhite and draws inspiration from his life. Having an insight into the spirit of Indian culture, deeply devoted though he is to Christianity, he finds, on a detached study of facts, that Christianity can fulfil itself best in India and influence the course of Indian life only by becoming Indian in spirit, and not by proselytizing attempts. He even conceives of Christianity as a small shrine within the precincts of the main shrine of Hinduism. 'The small shrine will add to the beauty of the main shrine

and will enrich itself by its association with and incorporation into the latter. A study of Indian history convinces him that by such a course Christianity will neither be destroyed nor lose in any way.

The book is ably introduced with two forewords by Mr Horace Alexander and Dr Radhakrishnan. It is a thoughtful book which presents facts with great clarity and precision. It is sure to be of great interest to all serious students of religious problems in India for its bold and rational approach to the future of Christianity in this country. And as such its conclusions are bound to be particularly interesting and thought-provoking to other communities as well.

**INDIA IN TRANSITION.** By Dr. M. G. Nene and Dr. M. Barde (*Barsi, Dt. Sholapur*). Pp 400+XXIII, Price Rs. 7/8.

Here is a book on the political history of India from 1885 to date. The book covers a very stormy and interesting period in the history of our country. There is the passage from slavery to freedom, certainly a striking period, capable of showing heights of heroism and patriotism which must have been responsible for the successful termination of the political struggle for freedom from foreign domination. It is difficult to be objective and impartial in such an attempt, especially when we are so near the event and when we have also, to some extent, contributed to the evolution of freedom by fighting constantly against the foreign rulers. The task of the authors is really very difficult, and if there are excesses here and there they have to be pardoned as inherent in human nature. The authors seem to have done their part with success and distinction. Even a cursory reader will be struck by the infinite pains taken by them to make their account impartial and realistic as far as possible. Many valuable sources have been drawn upon intelligently: the vast political literature has been used, and the account has the air of something complete and satisfying. There is one drawback, however, namely that the general reader may not find the account very captivating. The authors have been all along realistic without being artistic, capable of holding our interest. Perhaps, their duty with which they set out was to be objective and impartial in their narration without using their imagination to surround their writing with the halo of something new. That duty they have performed ably.

The authors have a very interesting chapter 'Whither India?' That chapter gives the book its name *India in Transition*. The name of the book prepares the reader for some changes that India has to undergo. Also one gets to the inner mind of the authors. They are keen on India's progress according to her spiritual and ethical heritage.

I have one thing to submit. The authors will do well to get their book re-published by some good press. There are numerous typographical errors that detract

from the merits of the book, so ambitiously planned and brought out.

B. S. MATHUR

**THE ANCIENT QUEST.** By Swami Ramakrishnananda: *Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras: Price Rs. 1/8 : Pp 130.*

Here you have a set of illuminating lectures given by Sasi Maharaj (so Swami Ramakrishnananda was familiarly called by his brother monks) during 1893-1911. As the title suggests the book deals with the eternal quest of man to find himself. Finding himself is not an ordinary experience or achievement. It comprehends all; it refers to man's quest of God in himself; it is his earnest desire to be eternally happy and contented. You think of freedom of senses in politics. That is not enough, and that cannot give you contentment; that cannot make you a real master. You need freedom from senses: this is what religion wants us to possess, because in it we have God himself in our company or we are one with Him, ever a master having controlled our base self and emotions. The ancient quest, dating from time immemorial and extending to infinity, must comprise our efforts to achieve this freedom from senses. It is of this quest of which the great Swami, who to all practical purposes founded the Ramakrishna Math and saw it prosper in Madras, thinks in course of these very bright and helpful lectures. He discusses the secrets of self, *maya*, transmigration, happiness, love and life itself in all its apparent complications. Having faith and tolerance the reader can turn to these lectures for light and revelation. Really interesting and instructive ideas are presented in a remarkably captivating fashion. The Swami's own experiences are grouped intelligently with stories, with the result that all is crystal clear. It comes out that man has one goal and that is to reach God. He can reach God within through his own efforts. In the beginning he must find a real teacher, who will lead him on to the great realization. Thus man will cease to be a beggar; he will be a real master.

These lectures make the mind soar high and will be found helpful and elevating to all aspirants for spirituality.

B. S. MATHUR

**SOME CAREERS FOR WOMEN.** By Mrs. Avabai B. Wadia. **INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION.** By Mrs. Pupul Jayakar. *An All-India Civil Code.* By Mrs. Mithan Lam. *All the three pamphlets published by Thacker & Co., Ltd., Bombay, for The All-India Women's Conference, each priced at As. eight only.*

The All India Women's Conference is no mere resolution-making body. It is doing meritorious work for the women of India by making its members write on things that matter most in the future uplift of women in India. It is increasingly clear that women have a

great responsibility, because their role now cannot be of subordination. They have education, they will have more of it, and they will have to take prominent parts in all walks of life. Our future progress depends on healthy co-operation between men and women.

*Some Careers for Women* is a very brief indication of the types of work that women can easily do to make their own living. They can get into journalism, paid social work, and the medical profession in ever-increasing numbers. They have to undergo necessary training to work as secretaries. But they must be told where they are to get this training for this profession or that. This information is given here for the benefit of our women, who are eager to make their own living.

*Industrial Co-operation* indicates the part the women have to play in the industrial life of the country. This part they can play beautifully by co-operating, and not by working in isolation. Many women are employed in cottage industries; they have not enough education to have their voice in the working of their destiny. Let them unite and reap benefits from co-operation.

*An All-India Civil Code* tells of the changes that have to be made in laws concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession and will. It is the earnest wish of the author that law should make men and women

equal before it. Women must have freedom to work out their destiny.

One thing I will add. These pamphlets cannot be called very successful essays for the reason that they are so short and sketchy. Yet, they may be of some help.

B. S. MATHUR

ACHARYA DHIRUVA SMARAKA GRANTHA—PARTS II & III: Edited by Rasiklal C. Parikh, Ratilal M. Trivedi, and Umashankar J. Joshi. Published by Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Post Box No. 23, Bhadra, Ahmedabad; Pp. 190 and 262; Price each volume Rs. 8/-.

We have received parts II and III of the *Acharya Dhiruva Smaraka Grantha* published in 3 parts by the Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad, in commemoration of Acharya Dr. Anandashankar B. Dhiruva, a great educationist and Sanskrit scholar, who passed away in April 1942. The first volume contains articles in Indian languages on personal reminiscences and learned subjects; the second and the third contain learned articles in English on personal reminiscences, general subjects, and on Indology, respectively. It is a fitting tribute to the memory of one who devoted his life to the enhancement and exposition of Sanskrit learning and culture.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA.

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1947

The Students' Home which was started to help poor and meritorious students to prosecute their studies and also to inculcate in them the high moral and spiritual ideals of Swami Vivekananda in order to supplement the purely academic education imparted by the University, has completed the twentieth year of its very useful career.

At the beginning of the year there were altogether 43 students, of whom 21 were free, 10 concession-holders, and 12 paying. During the year 17 students left the Home and 23 students were admitted. Thus at the end of the year there were 49 students, of whom 24 were free, 13 concession-holders, and 12 paying.

During the year Rs. 235/- were spent by way of monthly stipends, to six students at a time, selection having been made from needy and deserving college students residing outside the Students' Home. By way of help towards fees for examinations, Rs. 290/- were distributed during the year among twenty-two students belonging to several colleges of Calcutta and its neighbourhood.

One student stood first in order of merit in the I.A. examination, and three Intermediate examinees obtained Government scholarships.

As part of 'home training' religious classes were held at regular intervals and other religious celebrations observed. A manuscript magazine *Vidyarthi* was conducted by the students, and occasional debates were held on socio-religious topics.

The students managed by turns sweeping, cleaning, marketing and other activities connected with the Students' Home, besides cultivating a vegetable garden.

The management, while thanking the various donors and subscribers during the year, appeals to the generous public for further donations and subscriptions or endowments to enable the Home to maintain more students free of charge and to develop the institution by providing it with its own permanent building. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary, the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 20 Harinath De Road, Calcutta, or the General Secretary, The Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belurmath, Dist. Howrah. West Bengal.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, SILCHAR, ASSAM

#### REPORT FOR 1944-47

The Sevashrama which has been recognized as a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission since 1939 because of its useful work, has been rendering highly beneficial service to the poor in the district of Cachar in distant Assam for several past years; and the

following is a report of its activities for four years 1944-47,

Its activities are: 1) Religious, 2) Educational, and 3) Social Service.

1. *Religious*: It conducted several indoor and outdoor scriptural classes and arranged lectures on religious and cultural topics. Birthdays of the great prophets of the world were celebrated.

2. *Educational*: The Sevashrama conducted a Students' Home with 12 boys where moral training with special emphasis on simplicity of habit and purity of thought was imparted. Vocational training was also given to the students in weaving and gardening.

It also conducted a Library and Reading Room with 1045 books and several magazines and papers, which were well utilized.

Three Night Schools were run by the Sevashrama:

1) The Vivekananda Night School with two sections, one for boys, and another for girls, especially for the children of the Gurkha ex-sepoy. 2) The Night School at Krishnapur about 3 miles from the town meant for the ex-labourers of tea-gardens and 3) The Night School at Mehepur for Hindusthani labourers. The last has been temporarily closed for want of funds, and efforts are being made to collect funds and reopen it. In 1947 there were 49 and 25 students in the first two schools respectively.

3. *Social Service*: The Sevashrama did famine relief work in 1943-44, and flood relief work in 1946, by distributing food, clothes, and money. It also rendered medical aid and help to agriculturists and small handicraftsmen, especially weavers, by providing work for them and arranging the sale of their products at favourable rates; paddy husking for able-bodied women was also arranged. Five lantern lectures were organized on hygiene and religion.

The floods are almost a regular feature of Cachar, and the people as also the Sevashrama suffer from them every year. In 1946 the floods badly damaged the weaving section of the Students' Home, and the kitchen. These require to be rebuilt immediately. The Sevashrama also intends to raise the level of the site on which its buildings stand above the flood level. For this purpose it has to acquire the site at a cost of Rs. 10,000/-. A temple which is being built remains to be completed. The Library requires to be improved with additions of modern books. For all these purposes the Sevashrama needs about Rs. 20,000/- of which Rs. 6,000/- have already been received towards land acquisition. The Sevashrama depends entirely on generous contributions from the public for its activities. As such it appeals to the public to contribute liberally to meet these needs.

The Sevashrama renders its thanks to all those who have helped it with gifts of cash and kind or in any other way to carry on its work of service.

All contributions will be thankfully accepted by the Secretary of the Sevashrama, Silchar, Cachar, Assam.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, COIMBATORE DIST.

### REPORT FOR 1947-48

The Vidyalyaya, which was started 18 years back, is run on lines of the ancient *Gurukul* system. It is the aim of the institution to instil into the minds of its members the three qualities of devotion to God, love of Motherland, and confidence in oneself. The Vidyalyaya has various activities; the work done during the year under report is given below:

*The High School*: It had a strength of 169 boys. All the 12 students who were sent up for public examination came out successful. The boys were encouraged to form various associations and run them so that they may be trained to shoulder responsibilities.

*The Gandhi Training School*: This school where teachers are trained in Basic Education was lent to the Government for 2 years. This year 28 Government teachers were trained in addition to the usual Secondary training. Dr. Zakir Hussain expressed his deep appreciation of the Mission's work when he visited the institution. From next year the Mission itself will run the school.

*T. A. T. Kalanlayam*: This is a Higher Elementary School with seven standards serving Perianaickenpalayam and the neighbouring villages. There were 128 boys and 70 girls during the year. The children of the school produced yarn and cloth worth Rs. 500/- during the year.

*Industrial Section*: Training was given in carpentry, tailoring, and spinning. An Iron Foundry was set up last year where a few sugarcane crushers were manufactured.

*Serthamani Memorial Dispensary*: It serves the need of the surrounding villages as well as of the pupils of the Vidyalyaya. 16,671 patients were treated during the year.

*Night School*: A night school is being run in the Harijan colony of Perianaickenpalayam with 25 students.

Apart from the above activities the Vidyalyaya conducts competitions in Rural Sports and Arts. It has a publication department in Tamil. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and other great men and saints were celebrated.

32 boys received free education with boarding and lodging, 29 received free boarding and lodging, and 49 free education during the year.

The Vidyalyaya needs funds for the construction of a temple, dormitories, workers' quarters and to develop the workshop into a full-fledged Industrial School. It appeals to the generous public for donations for any of the above purposes. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of the Vidyalyaya.

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

APRIL 1949

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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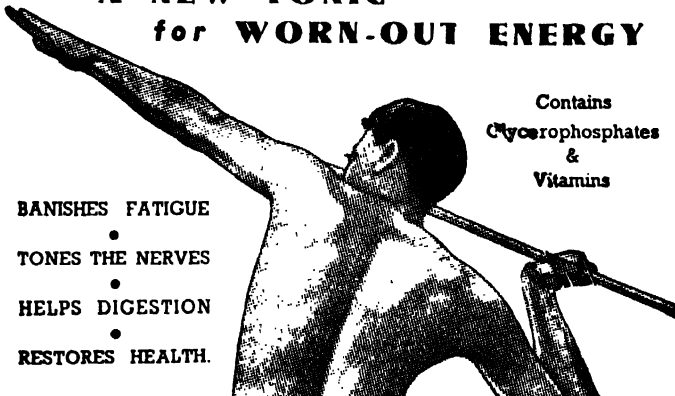
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

APRIL 1949

No. 4



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

20th April 1900  
Alameda, California

My dear Joe—

Received your note today. I wrote you one yesterday but directed it to England thinking you will be there.

I have given your message to Mrs Betts. I am so sorry this little quarrel came with A—. I got also his letter you sent. He is correct so far as he says—Swami wrote me—‘Mr Leggett is not interested in Vedanta and will not help any more—You stand on your own feet.’ It was as you and Mrs Leggett desired me to write him from Los Angeles about New York—in reply to his asking me what to do for funds.

Well, things will take their own shape—but it seems in Mrs Bull’s and your mind there is some idea that I ought to do something. But in the first place I do not know anything about the difficulties. None of you write me anything about what is that for—and I am no thought-reader.

You simply wrote me a general idea that A—. wants to keep things in his hands. What can I understand from it ? What are the difficulties ? What are the differences about I am as much at dark as about the exact date of the date of destruction !!

And yet Mrs Bull’s and your letters show quite an amount of vexation !!!

These things get complicated sometimes, in spite of ourselves. Let them take their shape.

I have executed and sent the will to Mr Leggett as desired by Mrs Bull.

I am going on—sometimes well and other times ill—I cannot say on my conscience, that I have been least benefited by Mrs Wilton. She has been good to me—I am very thankful. My love to her. Hope she will benefit others.



For writing to Mrs Bull this fact—I got a four page sermon—as to how I ought to be grateful and thankful, etc., etc.

All that is sure the outcome of this A— business !!

Sturdy and Mrs Johnson got disturbed by Margo and they fell upon me. Now A— disturbs Mrs Bull and of course I have to get the brunt of it. Such is life!

You and Mrs Leggett wanted me to write him to be free and independent and that Mr Leggett is not going to help them—I wrote it—now what can I do.

Whether John or Jack does not obey you—am I to be hanged for it? What do I know about this Vedanta Society—did I start it? Had I any hand in it?

Then again nobody condescends to write me anything about what the affair is !!

Well, this world is a great fun . . .

I am glad Mrs Leggett is recovering fast. I pray every moment for her complete recovery. I start for Chicago on Monday. A kind lady has given me a pass up to New York to be used within three months. The Mother will take care of me—She is not going to strand me now after guarding me all my life.

Ever yours gratefully,  
Vivekananda

July 20th, 1900  
102 East 48th Street  
New York

Dear Joe—

Possibly before this reaches you I will be in Europe, London or Paris as the chance of steamer comes.

I have straightened out my business here. The works are at Mr. Whitmarsh's suggestion in the hands of Miss Waldo.

I have to get the passage and sail. Mother knows the rest.

My *intimate* friend did not materialize yet and writes she will be sometime in August and she is dying to see a Hindu and her soul is burning for Mother India.

I wrote her I may see her in London. Mother knows again. Mrs Huntington sends love to Margot and expects to hear from her, if she is not too busy with her scientific exhibits.

With all love to sacred cow of India, to yourself, to the Leggetts, to Miss (What's her name?) the American rubber plant,

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

14th July 1901

My dear Joe—

I am ever so glad to hear . . . coming to Calcutta. Send him immediately to the Math. I will be here . . . If possible I will keep him here for a few days and then let him go again to Nepal.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

57 Ram Kanto Bose's Street  
Calcutta

My dear Joe—

I have invited a few friends to dinner tomorrow Sunday.

Will you kindly send Rahim Bux (cook) tomorrow with some fowl, eggs and mutton to cook a dinner for them?

He ought to come earlier.

We expect you at tea. Every thing will be ready then.

Sri Mother is going this morning to see the new Math. I am also going there. Today at 6 P. M. Nivedita is going to preside. If you feel like it and Mrs Bull strong do come.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH 1922

One afternoon, nearly four or five months after the passing away of Swami Brahmanandaji, a highly placed Government Officer came to the Belur Math to see Mahapurush Maharaj. He saluted Mahapurushji touching his feet with great devotion and sat on the floor. He then introduced himself saying: 'I first saw Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) nearly three years ago, since when I used to come to him whenever I had an opportunity. He was very kind to me and used to give me spiritual advice. And in my heart I chose him as my *guru*. One day when I expressed my desire to have initiation from him, he gave me great hope and said, "You will have initiation, of course, but don't be in a hurry. Now go on practising what I tell you. Let the mind be ready; everything will come afterwards." That day he gave me a lot of spiritual instruction. Since then I began doing *japa* and meditation according to his instructions. I would often come to see him. But such is my misfortune that I could not have initiation from him. Now the earnest desire of my heart is that

you may kindly initiate me. You have succeeded him and occupy his seat; his power is working through you. Please have compassion for me and do not refuse me my prayer.'

Mahapurush Maharaj had not seen the devotee before, still he addressed him affectionately as a very well-known and intimate person. He said: 'You are very fortunate to have received the blessings of Maharaj and to have been instructed by him. Do know what he has instructed you to be the *mantra*. That will fulfil your heart's desire. I don't think there is any need for initiation in addition. Call on Him with a yearning heart, weep for him and pray; you will surely have his vision. And if it is necessary he will also initiate you. His mercy cannot fail. He is no common realized *guru*. He is a companion of God Himself. By the mere grace of such souls men are liberated from the bondage of the world. When God descends on earth in human form for the good of humanity, they also come with Him for preaching the religion of the age and for completing God's Divine mission in the world. They

don't usually come separately. Apart from that, where could he have gone? He has only left the gross body. He is now in a finer body and in a finer plane with Sri Ramakrishna and doing infinite good to the devotees. Take it from me, you will surely have his vision.'

The Devotee: 'What you say is very true. I have also found clear evidence of it. After the passing away of Swami Brahmanandaji, I was very dejected by the thought that even after coming in contact with such a good *guru* I did not have the good luck of being initiated by him. I prayed fervently to Sri Ramakrishna. He has listened to my prayer. Three days ago I saw Swami Brahmananda in a dream and he also very kindly initiated me. But since waking I have not been able to recollect the *mantra*. I have tried my best, but to no purpose. The mind has since then become very much disturbed. So I have come running to you; you must find a way out of this. It is my belief he will satisfy this want of mine through you.' So saying the person began to weep in great emotion. Noticing his yearning, Mahapurushji comforted him once more saying, 'When he has been so kind to you, you need have no anxiety any more. Everything will be set right by his grace. Don't be downcast. If it is necessary he will reveal himself to you once again and bestow his grace on you.'

Without, however, being comforted by this, the devotee repeatedly prayed to Mahapurushji to tell him the *mantra* himself. Finding no way out Mahapurushji apparently agreed and asking the devotee to wait a little entered into Swami Brahmananda's room and closed it. The temple of Swami Brahmanandaji had not yet been built. The articles of Swami Brahmanandaji's use were still in the room where he used to stay, and regular worship continued to be offered there. Nearly half an hour later Mahapurushji opened the door of the room and beckoned the devotee to follow him into it. The door was

closed again after both of them had entered. Shortly Mahapurushji came out alone and sat quietly on his own cot. Nearly an hour later the devotee also came out of Swami Brahmananda's room and prostrating himself before Mahapurushji said, 'My life has become blessed today. You gave me exactly the same *mantra* which Swami Brahmanandaji imparted to me in the dream. This has specially delighted me. I clearly saw that he is within you. Bless me so that I may realize the ideal in this life.'

Mahapurushji: You are very fortunate. It is because of your many past good deeds that Swami Brahmananda has been so kind to you and has bestowed mercy on you in many ways. Now devote yourself heart and soul to spiritual practices with what you have got. The true devotee resigns himself to God during the period of spiritual practices, like a kitten depending utterly on its mother. And he calls on Him weeping and prays to Him yearningly. God alone knows when He will reveal Himself to His devotee. Resigning yourself to Him wait at the door of His mercy. Pray to Him with all your heart and soul for devotion and faith and love. He will fill your heart with all these.

The Devotee: Now please tell me a little how I should meditate and do *japa*. We always remain immersed in various kinds of worldly work; apart from that there is the heavy responsibility of service. Please bless me so that I may be free from these bondages and call on God.

Mahapurushji: Our blessing is always there. But you have also to devote yourself to spiritual practices with some amount of doggedness. And while counting His name pray yearningly to Him: 'O Lord! Grant me the power to meditate on you, and merge my mind in your lotus feet.' Know for certain that He will grant it. He is the *guru* in the heart of all—the One who is the path-finder, the Lord, Mother, Father, Friend, and the All-in-All of every being. Everybody in the

world whom men regard as their own and for whom they weep is only for a few days. He alone is the Eternal Companion. For the present go on counting His name as much as you can and you will see that meditation will come automatically. As you will go on repeating the name of your Ideal Deity with great love you will begin to feel gradually a serene and limpid joy in the heart. When that blissful feeling becomes steady, it also becomes a kind of meditation. There are various kinds of meditation. You should meditate with great love on the luminous form of the Lord in your heart and think that the cave of your heart has been illumined by the light of His divine form. As you continue in this way your heart will be filled with joy unfelt before. Gradually the form will also disappear and there will only remain a feeling of bliss of the nature of Intelligence. This is also a kind of meditation. There are so many other varieties. You yourself will gradually come to know them. The real thing is to call on Him sincerely. The impurities of the heart are washed away by fervently calling on Him and weeping for Him. Mind gradually becomes purified, and then the pure mind itself acts as the *guru*. And you will know from within yourself what is necessary for you at a particular time, how you have to meditate, and how you should call on Him, and so on. Haven't you read what the Master used to say? The Master used to say, "The wind of grace is always blowing, why not unfurl the sail?" Unfurling the sail means doing spiritual practices with perseverance. He is ever ready to bestow His grace, like a mother, with outstretched arms, ready to take up her innocent child in her lap. Practise a little and you will realize how great is His mercy.

The Devotee: Often I am at a loss to know how I should conduct myself in the world. It is very trying always to go on satisfying every individual.

Mahapurushji: You have of course

read the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Read it carefully. You will find solution of these problems there in the words of the Master Himself. This world is neither yours nor mine. God has created this world. All whom you call your own are God's. Live in the world with this attitude. Wife, son and daughter, relations and near ones are all God's creatures. Whatever service you do to them, do it looking upon them as God. In that case you will not get much entangled. And there should be discrimination at the same time. Discrimination between the real and the unreal will give rise to the spirit of renunciation. You are householders—what harm is there? But why should you get much entangled because of that? Whatever duty you owe to others, you must do it, but do it all in a spirit of service to the Lord. The boundless grace of the Lord is on you. There are so many individuals madly running about for a little food. They are restless with the thought of food itself; where is time for them to call upon God? You have no anxiety for food and dress. Is it a small mercy? God creates all opportunities for those who are truly devoted to Him. Rise up at dead of night when all are asleep and call on God with one-pointedness of mind and be one with Him. Weep much and tell Him all the woes of your heart. The more you weep for Him the more the dirt of your mind will be washed away; it will become pure and spotless. God reveals Himself to that pure mind. Midnight is the best time for spiritual practices. You have good signs; you will have success. That's why I am telling you so much. Work hard for sometime in the beginning, and you will find that your heart and mind will be filled with pure joy. You will get drunk as it were by the wine of bliss. What joy is there in worldly pleasures? To one who comes to enjoy even an atom of divine bliss worldly pleasures becomes tasteless.

The Devotee: Is it necessary to count the number while repeating the Lord's name?

Please tell me a little how much *japa* I should do and how ?

Mahapurushji : *Japa* can be done in three ways—with a rosary, with the fingers, or mentally. The best *Japa* is done mentally. Tulsidas has said, 'It is bad to do *Japa* with a rosary, fair, with the fingers, and best when done mentally.' If the habit of doing *Japa* mentally be cultivated, then one can do it while moving about, eating, and lying down and during all the hours of the day. If the habit of mental *Japa* is practised for some time, it goes on even during sleep and a current of bliss will always flow in the heart. But in the beginning it is good to do *Japa* by counting a fixed number. Take a seat and do a fixed number of *Japa* every day morning and evening. See that you do at least one thousand at a time ; the more you can do the better. The numbers can be counted on the fingers or on the rosary. (So saying he showed the devotee the method of doing *Japa*). The Master used to say, the name and the Person for whom the name stands are One. Picture in your mind the form of your Ideal Deity while repeating His name. In this way *Japa* and meditation can be done together. God is the Inner Ruler ; He sees the heart. He does not heed the number or the time. If God's name be taken sincerely

even only once, it will have more effect than a million or billion repetitions of His name with a restless mind. What is needed is intensity, yearning, and sincerity. Success will come quickly if yearning comes to heart. All these do not happen in a day. Stick to it with doggedness ; everything will come in time. And come to the Math now and then. Here are many *sadhus*. Stay in their company. Even the sight of *sadhus* awakens the love of God in the heart. If doubts arise in the mind in the course of your practices, you can come and ask me. The Master has put us here for that reason exactly. But you should know that doubts do not come so much when there is sincerity. Simplicity, sincerity, and purity—these are the foundations of spiritual life. Have you not read how the robber Ratnakar became perfect by repeating 'mara', 'mara' ? You must have faith—childlike faith—in the words of the *guru*. All doubts dwell on the fringe of the mind ; but when it turns inward and dives deep into the inmost regions then there is unalloyed bliss and the heart becomes filled with the love of God. Of course, all doubts do not disappear till God is realized. 'When the Supreme is seen, the knot of one's heart is cut, all doubts disappear, and all *karma* becomes exhausted.'

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (III)

BY THE EDITOR

A 'foreign question' of one kind or another, often similar in many respects to the Western question of our time, has always confronted Indian society since history began. The way India has met such continuous challenges from outside not only makes her true history but forms a large and important part of the story of civilization itself.

We are of course using the word India here in an ideological sense. Indian society is a developing and expanding organization. From very insignificant beginnings, territorial and tribal, it steadily spread over new lands and enlarged itself by bringing within its fold numerous other races and cultures found in India. This point is not always clearly

realized, so that when we talk of Indian society we often talk vaguely or in terms of a static conception.

The two fundamental problems of civilization which constitute its real and basic history are the problems of social cohesion and of individual freedom. Social cohesion is necessary for security and survival, while individual initiative lies at the root of all progress. Man instinctively feels the need for social cohesion, for without an efficient organization and a just authority opportunities for development are not available. The highest fruits of culture can be brought to the reach of all only within the area of a wide and efficient organization. But man has also abused organization and authority for personal and sectional ends, as he has abused every means to a happy life under the sky, because he has not always had an insight into the true meaning of progress, that is to say, into the nature and destiny of man.

Human societies started in a very small way in prehistoric times and have gradually grown into the vast organizations that we see today. Several processes have contributed to such transformations, of which the most obvious and impressive is the political. Political methods appear in our eyes as the most essential factors of social cohesion. Yet if we glance back to past history we are no less impressed by the fact that vast political structures which arose all over the world in answer to the demand for larger organizations repeatedly toppled down for lack of a strong basis of psychological unity. Loyalty to a society rests primarily on a psychological attitude. If the necessary psychological unity is absent a political structure is sure, sooner or later, to break down. Contrariwise, if the psychological unity is present it will gradually translate itself into its equivalent organizational forms. Such organizational forms may not and need not always coincide with political structures. For political unities rest on other factors also, administrative, geographical,

and so on. But when psychological unity is present we need not be over-eager for large political unities, for small political structures suited to local conditions can live in concord and peace and without much and serious conflict within the field of a common society which is held together by a psychological tie.

In these days of emphasis on politics and still more on power politics such conceptions are not easily understood, for it seems to us that an intelligent view of life and progress has generally been lost to the present humanity. Today we are preoccupied with means and have little conception of the end to which these means must lead. For sometime past man in his pride has been worshipping power as an end, without realizing that the pursuit of power as an end is destructive of all that we hold dear in a civilization. In such a situation organization turns into a menace, instead of an aid, to individual evolution. There is also substantial truth in the demand for the limitation of certain organizations, political and economic, and for devolution of power to smaller units, for it has become plain that organization pushed beyond a point stifles individual initiative and creative effort. Power (*artha* and *kama*) is not an absolute end, but just a means for the evolution of spiritual perfection. But today power divorced from spirituality, like the jinn in the *Arabian Nights*, threatens mankind with anarchy and extinction.

All our interests today, material, moral, and spiritual, demand the unification of mankind, but at no time in the past was the world so divided by hatred and conflict. We talk of cooperation but cooperation is alien to the conception of power politics that rules the world. Apparently the worldwide stresses and conflicts can be relieved by either America or Russia imposing their own creeds on the rest of humanity. It certainly looks as if the fate of the world lies on the knees of these two giants. Both are winning converts and aiming at political leadership of the planet,

Such political shortcuts to unity have always appealed to man. If, however, we are prepared to take any lesson from the past, from the fate of the empires of Alexander and Caesars, Jenghiz Khan and Napoleon, we may not have much difficulty to realize that the present discords cannot be removed or a world-wide social cohesion secured by political methods that do not rest upon a common psychological attitude. It is in the hearts of men that peace and unity must first be constructed before they can be embodied in external structures. There cannot be a body without a soul.

This is the number one problem of our times, namely, how to bring mankind within the framework of a common idea. We need a new lodestar of human loyalty. This cannot be found in any ism or creed, for men are different and need different institutions though all aspire for equality. Unity and equality have been much misunderstood and misused. Unity is not uniformity. India achieved a splendid and, we may say, a unique success in her own field of social experimentation, and she brings to the modern world her own solution of the problem of social cohesion without which civilization cannot survive. We mean the principle of her society and not its externals which change and must change with the times. India's success was due to the creation of a psychological unity among the varied elements of her population by means of a spiritual interpretation of existence which faced as well as transcended the facts of life as they exist. A bare outline of the Indian attempt and its consequences will be given below. But before we embark upon it certain preliminary remarks require to be made.

Social development proceeds by means of resolution of conflicts. When two societies or cultures come into contact, the meeting is not pleasant but marked by hostility. The more powerful one tries either to exterminate

or enslave the other. The advance of White civilization in recent times in Africa, America, and Polynesia is a witness to this. Extermination, where it is possible, solves the problem quickly and radically. But we are yet far from aware of the psychological injury such ruthless methods inflict upon the victor. But that is a different question. When, however, extermination fails, the group that is laid flat in the political encounter tries to save itself in either of the following ways: The first response to the challenge of a powerful adversary takes the form of reactionism. The threatened culture tries to save itself by retiring into a shell and avoiding contact with the 'unspeakable' foreigner (the *mlechchha*, *kafir*, gentile or barbarian). This is perfectly symbolized by religion entering the kitchen pot. The other response is purely mimetic. The underdog tries, in this case, to transform itself into a replica of its enemy. This is the way in which Russia, Japan, Egypt, and Turkey, in recent history, have tried to meet the challenge from the scientific and technical West.

It is one of the most impressive and instructive facts of human culture that peoples all over the world tenaciously cling to the channels of self-expression they have evolved in the course of their history. They would often prefer swift extermination in a bloody battle to mere physical survival at the price of their way of life. This is how martyrs have been moved to ultimate sacrifices. The instinctive preference, at low levels in particular, for total and bloody death to renunciation of one's own way of life is based on a great psychological truth which is becoming plain today through the findings of anthropologists. It has been observed that when a people is compelled under pressure of 'civilization' wholly to give up its traditional pursuits, it gradually becomes listless and finally loses all capacity for effort. And in the long run such listlessness makes it lose all interest in life and disappear altogether physically. So it is,

after all, a choice between a swift extermination and a slow death.

When White civilization went to the Papuan head-hunters in South Pacific and imposed its own standard of conduct upon them, without finding out suitable alternative outlets for their anarchic impulses, the Papuans grew listless losing all zest for life and could not be moved to any effort for improvement or existence. They are dying out. Similarly the aborigines in Australia and New Zealand are also said to be fast becoming extinct, not as a result of White ruthlessness but as a consequence of the loss of their traditional life. Analogous cases can also be observed in modern India. For example, the Lepchas of the eastern Himalayas and various types of *adibasis* in the central plains or in the Tarai at the foot of the Himalayas are increasingly sharing the same fate. Apparently they are dying of flu, measles, or shortage of women, but really as a consequence of 'civilization.' The biological failures, so sudden and unexpected, cannot be explained except as expressions of a psychological breakdown.

When a people's way of life is subverted completely and replaced entirely by a new one by the high pressure method of civilization, the people become denuded of all creative effort. The history of Greece in post-Christian times is laden with instruction in this respect. Other instances will easily come to the mind of the reader. Creativity and survival of a people can be assured not by suppressing their accustomed channels of expression altogether or by detaching them from their traditional roots, but by finding symbolical and harmless outlets for their anarchic impulses and by a new orientation of their efforts. In a vast majority of cases, both individual and collective, restraint beyond a point involves grave psychological penalty that proves fatal to the organism or society. Modern psychological discoveries provide illuminating commentary on the dictum of

the Gita—*na buddhibhedam janayet ajnanam* etc. Nature can be controlled, not by suppression but by intelligent expression.

We were talking of the two kinds of responses from a culture threatened by its more powerful adversary. Reactionism does not save a culture. It is a confession of weakness and inner untruth which fears the light of knowledge. However much one may try to avoid the adversary, the adversary will not let one alone for a long time. In the end the dominant culture gets the other by the throat and destroys it utterly. Mimesis on the other hand appears to be more successful at first. But a people which willingly makes itself a replica of another becomes sterile of all creative effort and prepares its own doom in a not distant future. Nor is it successful in escaping the hostile attention of its enemy. It is not respected for its imitation which only inspires contempt. And if it tries to acquire the power which gives its adversary superiority, the latter sees to it that the former is irrevocably crushed. Imitation does not resolve conflicts which arise from the deep factors of blood and race, which can be transcended only by a spiritual conception. Some Whites and Blacks have for years lived together and shared the same culture at the same spots on this planet without ever being welded into a unity. How to overcome such barriers and build a society ensuring equal opportunities and justice to all its members is still a fundamental problem of civilization.

Certain religions have tried to solve this by carrying over into a large area the emotional attitudes appropriate to a family or the tribe. But the emotional appeal to the brotherhood of man does not carry conviction to the modern mind distracted by disbeliefs. We need more than emotional religions talking in languages appropriate to a pre-scientific age. We need a true metaphysic to ground these religions on a firm basis. Only thus they can achieve their aims.



A third outcome of the encounter between civilizations is possible. And in this case the initiative for a right solution of the conflict may come either from the physically dominant side or the threatened adversary. But more often than not it comes from the political victim. The threatened culture may respond in an altogether new way, distinct from the ones mentioned above. It may, if its spiritual resources are superior to those of its enemy, mount a spiritual counter-offensive which ultimately gets the better of its opponent. The offensive not only guarantees physical survival and a creative future to the people from which it originates, but also generates new political forces which finally break up the political structure set up by the opponent on a basis of force, injustice, and exploitation. And this inward spiritual force prepares the ground for a wider synthesis. Our social and political institutions, like the other elements of a civilization, are the outward manifestation of an inward spiritual force. If that force is absent or is supplanted by a superior one, the outward manifestations will inevitably disappear or be changed. A society, in the words of Lincoln, is dedicated to a proposition. If the proposition is valid, the society lives; but if it fails to meet the new tests presented by the developing experience of a community the society breaks up.

When a culture superior in military, scientific, and economic power based on the technique of production faces an adversary that is inferior to it in these respects but superior in spiritual resources, the outcome is a fusion in which the spirit of one adapts for its requirements the valuable material and scientific achievements of the other. This happened often in the past, the most remarkable instance in Western history being the union of the Greek and the Roman. Such unification creates a wider civilization which becomes reflected in appropriate political structures.

If we look at history in this way, then the

essential thing in the development of civilizations presents itself as progressive and wider unification of mankind through a spiritual force. Social cohesion is at bottom secured by a spiritual idea, and such cohesion becomes stronger and wider the nearer it approaches the basic truth of man and nature. True unity is not of the form, which is another name for death, but of the Spirit. History is thus the story of the Spirit.

When the curtain of history first rises in India on the banks of the Indus (the exact date is unknown and is still the sport of guess), we are confronted with a civilization that is fully developed in essence but which occupies only an insignificant patch of earth. It is the Aryan culture, of which we get a picture in the *Vedas*. We find that even at that distant date the Aryans touched the very bottom of all ethical and spiritual researches when they proclaimed the divinity and equality of man and regarded society as a co-operative enterprise for the evolution of spiritual values. At this dawn of history the Aryans had not only made the ultimate discoveries in the realm of spirit but also enjoyed political and military supremacy. The political power, of course, passed away in after ages to new races and peoples, but the spiritual idea never suffered a reverse and gradually brought within the frame-work of a common society all kinds of races and cultures. Humanity upto-date has not awakened to a greater ideal than that proclaimed by the vedic Aryans, the founders of the *sanatana dharma*. Our historical sense, mainly a product of insufficient study of a narrow section of civilization, revolts at the idea, but facts are stubborn realities and cannot be suppressed by fancies. Civilization on the material plane is simply a translation of this divine idea of man. Today all our aspirations for social and economic justice need this metaphysical support. Mere emotional appeals in the name of religion or any other ism or way of life will not be effective

against hatred, skepticism, and disbelief. We need a conviction grounded on reason and experience.

The *Vedas*, the *Sutras*, the *Smritis*, and the *Epics* all record the assimilation of new races and the expansion of the Aryan culture. The Aryans did not attempt wholesale extermination of foreign peoples and cultures (some slaughter is inevitable), but slowly brought them all into a common social whole. This was possible because political power was backed by spiritual understanding rooted in the truth of man and of the need for multiform expression in nature. The outside impacts led to wonderful developments of the vedic tradition which radiated in periodical waves to distant corners of India and the then outside world till it led to new growth and transformation of civilizations not only here but also abroad.

A very interesting fact connected with the spread of the Aryan civilization is that the most brilliant developments of the metaphysical idea and new innovations in religion and ethics took place at the fringes of such contacts, that is, exactly at those places where new racial and cultural factors confronted the advancing Aryan society and called for fresh synthesis of cults and beliefs. For example, cultural and spiritual and even political

supremacy gradually and steadily passed, over a period of two thousand years or so, from the Indus and the upper Ganges Valley to the Gangetic doab and beyond. Similar progress can be noticed to some extent in the advance towards the south. The Kurus yield place to the Panchalas, the Panchalas, to the Videhas. Upanishadic researches reach their brilliant peak at the court of Janaka in Videha. But shortly after the political power along with the cultural supremacy passes further east to the Vajjians and the birthland of Buddhism. Magadha rises in new glory on the soil treated by this spiritual leaven. It is a fascinating theme requiring a whole volume for adequate treatment. The rise of the *Upanishads*, the story of *Ramayana*, the birth of Bhagavatism, Jainism, and Buddhism, the political ascendancy of the Nandas, the Mauryas, and the Guptas all afford illuminating commentary on the impact of Aryan culture on alien ones. In our own day the ancient tradition faced the challenge of Western secularism and political power in its severest form in the lower Ganges valley. And it was exactly from here that the true and perfect response came, after a series of timid reactions. The vedic idea seems to be deathless.

(To be continued)

## MIND IN HORMIC PSYCHOLOGY

By DR P. T. RAJU

(Continued from the March issue)

### II

The scientific outlook of the nineteenth century was dominated by mechanistic explanation. Whichever explanation was not mechanistic was rejected as unscientific, and unscientific meant irrational. But towards the close of the nineteenth, and the begin-

ings of the twentieth centuries biologists discovered a number of facts which stubbornly refused to be explained mechanistically. There was an outcry for the liberation of biology from mechanistic explanation and, therefore, from the physical sciences. In the first two decades of the twentieth century a large

number of biologists raised their voices against mechanism, some of the foremost among whom are Driesch, Thomson, Huxley, Haldane, and E. B. Russell. Psychology, in the first enthusiasm of its conversion into a science, adopted mechanism, the inevitable outcome of which was behaviourism, though it could have been much worse; for even behaviourism, which was the science of at least animal behaviour could not be thoroughly mechanistic. The outlook for psychology became gloomy; spiritual values seemed to be at a stake; and even culture and civilization were found to be inexplicable. At such a juncture Hormic psychology came as a relief. If biology could liberate itself from the physical sciences, why not psychology? Psychology followed in the wake of biology and accepted purposiveness. The activity of life is purposive, so also is that of the mind. Instead of mechanistic explanation we have the teleological.

So far Hormic psychology has done real service to the science of mental life. But are life and mind the same? Can the method of explanation of the one be adequately applied to the other? This question was raised already by some, particularly by Olaf Stapledon, Ludwig Klages, and Hans Prinzhorn, from the side of ethics, culture, and civilization. But McDougall protests that their objections, if granted, would introduce the untenable dualism of the animal and human mind. Every thing can be explained in terms of sentiments and their growth. 'Until this interpretation of the facts shall have been shown to be inadequate, there would seem to be no sufficient foundation for the new dualism of Klages and Prinzhorn.'

If the dualism of the animal and the human mind and, therefore, of the biological and the psychological sciences is not justified, can the dualism of the physical and the biological sciences be justified? That is why McDougall's contention that 'one advantage of the Hormic theory over all others is that it enables us to sketch in outline an intelligible,

consistent, and tenable theory of the continuous organic evolution, evolution of bodily forms and mental functions in intelligible relation to one another; and this is something no other can achieve,'<sup>26</sup> is not at all appealing. If it is this continuity alone that is valuable then mechanism preserves it better. For it professes to explain not only organic but also inorganic evolution in the same terms. That is, it applies the same method to explain matter, life, and mind. But what is wanted of any science is not the levelling down of everything in the universe to a homogeneous principle, but the discovery of peculiarities. Even Lloyd Morgan with his naturalistic bias or what Alexander calls 'natural piety' differentiates between life and mind, though he is unwilling to admit a separate entity or entelechy called life and a separate reality called mind, and treats both life and mind as new relatedness which introduce a new go into the order of the material universe. Both life and mind introduce different kinds of behaviour into the material particles they 'involve'. There are other biologists who emphasize this difference. J. S. Haldane writes: 'Psychology must be regarded as a branch of knowledge which deals, not with the relatively abstract aspects of experience dealt with by the mathematical, physical, and biological sciences, but with the more concrete experience which is that of conscious behaviour and the interest and values expressed in it.'<sup>27</sup> Further, 'what we regard as a mere organism behaves, in both its development and character, as its parent organism and its progenitors behaved; but this only exemplifies blind maintenance of the coordinated unity which we call life. The special characters of this have gradually differentiated themselves in the course of evolution, this differentiation being necessarily recapitulated more or less in individual reproduction. To attribute

<sup>26</sup> *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> J. S. Haldane: *The Sciences and Philosophy*, p. 146.

this maintenance to the memory of the past behaviour of the race is not necessary to our understanding of mere life, and only introduces obscurity. Memory is indeed a meaningless word apart from the ideas of a past in conscious relation to a present.<sup>28</sup> Even if the psychologists are anxious, in order to preserve continuity of explanation between life and mind, to recognize biological memory, all of even the progressive biologists are not prepared to admit memory into their science. If this continuity is to be kept up between life and matter also, inertia may be called physical memory. But where differences are significant, too much importance should not be attached to continuity.

It is not wrong to say that human behaviour is purposive; but it is an inadequate explanation. It places plant, protozoa, hero, and saint on the same level: we see purpose in the behaviour of all. In some, purpose is biological; in others it is something else. None would say that the purpose of the martyr in ascending the scaffold is biological. What brings about this difference? It may be said that we are taking an extreme instance. But it shows that the human mind has developed peculiar differences. It may be that the animal mind also contains these differences in the germ. We may admit the development of one into the other, but we cannot equate them. It may be that life and mind are correlates, as Lloyd Morgan asserts. But we cannot accept that in every form of life the peculiarities of mind are manifest equally. And when we speak of the growth of mind we do not mean the growth of life. When we explain mind we have to give more prominence to the factors that distinguish mind from life than to factors that are common to both.

For this reason the principle laid down by McDougall that 'all intelligent action is purposive, and all purposive action is more or

less intelligent,'<sup>29</sup> cannot be accepted without far-reaching modifications. It is true that all intelligent action is purposive, whether that action is that of Christ or Cain, man or moss, but all purposive action is not intelligent. McDougall places the adverb 'more or less' before intelligent, but there is no corresponding 'more or less' before purposive. Hence intelligence and purposiveness are not one and the same thing. To explain each in terms of the other must, therefore, end in failure. Otherwise, the materialist would argue that every activity is material, or concerned with matter; and none can disprove him. Mechanism would be as good an explanation. If we point to purposiveness and say that something besides mechanistic explanation demands recognition, we have to point to a similar extra factor in mind also. We cannot reasonably maintain that only life and mind go together, and not matter and life. If we are consistent in our use of the concept of evolution, when we acknowledge rudiments of mind even in the lowest forms of life, we have to acknowledge rudiments of life in all matter. And probably as a principle, we have to acknowledge some unrecognizable elements of mind even in matter and say that psychology studies the mental aspect of reality, biology, the life aspect, and physics, the material. Or we have to say that life emerges at a certain stage of inorganic evolution and mind at a certain stage of the organic. Anyway, psychology deals with something more than merely purposive behaviour.

The purposes, according to Hormic psychology, are at first fixed for every species. They are the goals towards which the instinct of animals are naturally directed. Being directed towards the goal, the instinct, as it were, knows the goal, and accordingly the behaviour of the animal becomes adaptable. When the goal is known any variation in the circumstances is appreciated by the animal, and the behaviour is altered accordingly.

<sup>28</sup> *The Philosophy of a Biologist*, p. 99.

<sup>29</sup> *Modern Materialism*, p. 44.

Here it is difficult to understand whether McDougall means that instinct contains intelligence also, or that instinctive behaviour is guided by intelligence also. He sometimes speaks of instinct and instinctive behaviour as different.<sup>30</sup> Instinctive action is due to instinct, and if it is intelligent, the reason may be the cooperation of intelligence. But if intelligence is the persistence of the instinctive energy in the pursuit of its goal, then instinct is, because of the very fact of being directed towards the goal, is intelligence. However it is difficult to pin down McDougall to either alternative.

If instinct and intelligence are two coordinate factors, then what justifiable ground can there be for Hormic psychology to emphasize instinct in preference to intelligence? McDougall gives a quotation from Dr Fr. Alverdes' *Social Life in the Animal World* in support of his position: 'Every act, A, is, therefore, at one and the same time a function of a constant, C, and a variable, V; expressed as a formula, this becomes  $A=f(C.V)$ . The constant is the instinctive element in the action of men and animals; the variable, on the other hand, is the element which produces in some cases an appropriate, in others an unforeseeable response to a situation. It must of course be emphasized that the analysis of the action of A into the components V and C is a purely abstract analysis. V and C must not be taken as two opposed natural agencies (as it were two souls) pulling the organism, now in this direction, now in that, as they battle for supremacy; they are merely symbols for the two different aspects of the same reality. The difference between instinctive and intellectual activity is: that in the former the constant, in the latter the variable, predominate. In instinctive action the C is greater than V (C > V), in intelligent action C is less than V (C < V).'<sup>31</sup> If really

both factors are present, why stress instinct? Is it to emphasize the continuity between animal and human behaviour? The difference between the two is that in the former C is predominant and in the latter V. Then human behaviour should be explained more in terms of V than in terms of C. If it is V that distinguishes the developed from the undeveloped or rudimentary mind, we see the true mark of mind in V.

Is the human behaviour to be understood in terms of instincts because the C in it is the instinct side? If such an idea lies at the root of McDougall's psychological outlook, the fallacy it contains can be easily brought out. First, the so-called C is not one but many. All activity is not guided by the self-same instinct; instincts are many. Thus the C in one action is the food-seeking instinct, in another the sex instinct. Hence C also is a variable. Nay more, it is at least as variable as V. McDougall speaks of a conative disposition and awareness of the class of objects following an instinct. Thus the food-seeking instinct is followed by the awareness of the class of food objects, and the so-called cognitive disposition is this awareness. Instinct is a conative disposition. Every conative disposition is followed by a cognitive disposition. Then is not one as variable as the other? Where is that C which is a constant? It is this interpretation of human mind as consisting of so many conative dispositions that led to remarks like those of Spearman, who says: 'The oreective mechanism, after all, does not consist simply of a number of instincts each fighting for its own hand. It includes some additional agency to control and coordinate these.'<sup>32</sup>

Peculiarly enough, what is called V seems to be more constant in human behaviour than what is called C. If this V, which corresponds to the adaptive capacity, is the same as the perception of the whole and its parts and

<sup>30</sup> *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 418.

<sup>31</sup> *The Energies of Man*, p. 41.

<sup>32</sup> *The Psychologies of 1930*, p. 360.

their interrelations,<sup>33</sup> then it is intelligence, which is called *g* by Spearman. It is the same for all instincts, for its function is the same, the perception of the whole and its parts and their interconnexions. Hence it is present not only in the operations of the same instinct under different conditions, but also in the operation of the different instincts. It seems more reasonable, therefore, to interpret mental life in terms of something like Spearman's *g*, which is a constant, than in terms of instincts.<sup>34</sup> It may be said that if something like *g* will have to be accepted as common to all cognitive dispositions, then something like *W* will have to be accepted for all conative dispositions. True, but while intelligence is not common to both life and mind, this something like *W* will be, and, therefore, cannot differentiate mind from life. And it is the aim of psychology to point out what is distinctly mental.

McDougall maintains that each instinct has its particular emotion, which gets attached to the object of the instinct. There are as many emotions as there are instincts, or at least as many primary emotions as there are primary instincts. The doctrine of separate unitary and indivisible emotions has been criticized by Bernard,<sup>35</sup> and in line with our above criticism we may point out that there is something common to all emotions. It is probably because of this criticism that McDougall speaks lately of emotional excitement with different qualities.<sup>36</sup> The classification of emotional excitement into different emotions is due to these different qualities.

The greatest importance is attached by Hormic psychologies to its doctrine of sentiments, with the help of which it explains society, ethics, culture, and civilization.

According to McDougall 'the essential nature of a sentiment, the scheme or plan of it, is then, a mental system in which a cognitive ability (in the older terminology, an 'idea') has become, through the individual's experience, functionally linked with one or more native propensities, linked in such a way that, when the ability comes into play (that is, when the corresponding object is perceived or otherwise thought of) the propensity also is brought into action and engenders its peculiar emotional tendency directed upon the object.'<sup>37</sup> The question to be raised now is whether we are still interpreting mental life in terms of the primacy of instincts. It is not whether instinct is still not a factor of mental life, but whether it is the dominant factor. We are earlier informed that every instinct has its natural goal, and that the goal of the instinct is the object of cognition. It is the instinct that sets the cognition in movement. But in a sentiment cognition leads. The cognitive ability first comes into play and then releases the instincts and their emotions. McDougall may say that this change is due to conditioning. Yet it is nothing but the admission that the growth of mind means the growth and leadership of intelligence.

There is a second point to notice in his view of sentiments. At first, in its primitive stages, mind works with some conative and cognitive dispositions, and also certain emotions. Every instinct has its own awareness and emotion. The sex instinct in its operation is followed by the awareness of the objects of the opposite sex and the peculiar emotional excitement. The same object is unnoticed when the instinct is not stirred. But in the sentiment the cognitive disposition ceases to be what it was; it is no longer a disposition which knows the object only as a sex object. For a cannibal among men and animals it is also a food object. To take a less extreme case, it

<sup>33</sup> *The Energies of Men*, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> Spearman admits *p*, *o*, and *w* besides *g*. But the first three factors are common to life and mind and so, not distinctive of mind.

<sup>35</sup> *Instinct*, p. 458.

<sup>36</sup> *The Energies of Men*, p. 148.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 223.

may be an object of dislike. That is, the cognitive disposition is proclaiming its independence of the conative disposition and, after setting itself free, is able to stir two or more instincts up into active service. The same phenomenon is expressed when we say that we first know the object and then desire it. In the animal life, it may be that in many cases the animal first wants and then knows the object, as is evidenced by the newly hatched chick which first pecks at anything including the cinnabar caterpillar which it loathes. But in the developed mind and even in the later experience of the chick it is otherwise.

When we consider the nature of our highly complex culture and civilization, explanations in terms of instincts or the primacy of instincts becomes absolutely inadequate. Bernard writes : 'The demand of the accumulated complex social environment, which we call modern civilization, is for an organism with a maximum of variation of activity at a maximum speed.'<sup>38</sup> If instinct itself can be so variable, it would be a contradiction in terms to call it an instinct. It is difficult to understand how McDougall can meet the objection of Stapledon. He says that Stapledon has failed to grasp 'the implications of the theory of instincts.' In the working of a developed sentiment, whether love of country, love of parent for the child, or of man for woman, we have to do not merely with a blending and conflicting of primitive impulses. Such a sentiment is a most complex organization comprising much elaborated cognitive structure as well as instinctive dispositions, and its working can only properly be viewed in the light of the principles of emergence and Gestalt.<sup>39</sup> But the question is : What is the guiding principle? Instinct or cognitive structure? It is the latter as McDougall admits. This might be an emer-

gent which works with some gestalt. But the instinct has lost its primacy. Every highly intelligent action and, as Bernard says, every habit complex is built upon some instinctive foundation.<sup>40</sup> But instinct does not dominate. Civilization is not to be explained in terms of instinct. The whole field of abnormal psychology is strong evidence in favour of the conflict between instinct and impulse on the one side and civilization on the other. Abnormal behaviour is flight from reality and civilization to the more primitive and animal type of behaviour, which is dominated by impulse and instinct. That is why Hormic psychology is able to offer one of the most satisfactory explanations of abnormality, and McDougall is so often referred to and quoted by some of the eclectic psychiatrists like W. Sadler. In fact, when McDougall is taking the help of elaborate 'cognitive structure' and gestalt, he is giving up the importance of instincts in developed mental life. In his *Character and Conduct of Life* he preaches self-criticism. What else is it except exhortation to follow reason and intelligence and not instinct and impulse? Or is intelligence an instinct?

There is a more fundamental contention which cannot be overlooked in this connection, namely, that the instincts are not necessarily directed towards some ends. Bernard says : 'That the instinct is necessarily directed towards some end, except in the general and the anthropomorphic sense that all activity represents some sort of adjustment or adaptation, is not true. It cannot be said that every instinctive action is purposeful, for instance, the flying of the moth into the flame. If by adaptive or being directed to some end is meant a useful end or even a conscious end, the absurdity of this contention becomes immediately apparent.'<sup>41</sup> Even taking the food-seeking instinct, the first pecking of the

<sup>38</sup> *Instinct*, p. 530.

<sup>39</sup> *Psychologies of 1921*, p. 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Instinct*, p. 516.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82.

chick does not disclose any awareness of eatable objects. It is doubtful whether even the human child, immediately after it is born, knows the nipple. It gets its acquaintance after it is placed into its mouth. It will suck even the tip of a finger at first. It is experience that teaches the chick to discriminate between the cinnabar caterpillar and the white of an egg. That is, instinctive action as such is blind. The instinctive awareness or cognitive disposition can consist not so much of the awareness of a class of objects pertaining to that instinct as in the awareness of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that follows instinctive activity. Instinct of instinctive activity is not accompanied as such by an awareness of objects which satisfy it and which do not, as is evidenced by the behaviour of newly hatched chicken. This discriminating factor is the same for all instincts. That is why what McDougall calls the variable factor is more constant than the instincts. Instinctive activity is purposeful, not in the sense that it knows what classes of objects in the world satisfy it but in the sense that it knows its own satisfaction. This satisfaction is the satisfaction of the instinct, not necessarily a feeling of the welfare of the individual. Even the moth's instinct is satisfied when it rushes into the flame. It is the function of intelligence or cognition to find out which classes of objects satisfy the instinct and conduce to the welfare of the individual. When discrimination develops, instinct abdicates and accepts the guidance of intelligence.

As discrimination grows and the division of objects progresses, McDougall tells us, apperception comes on the scene. Without its synthetic activity the world would be an unwieldy chaos. The logical structure of the world is grasped through discrimination and apperception, and the historical through association. Now, none of the three processes is instinctive. They are aspects of intelligence. As intelligence develops it seeks new objects,

creates new ideals which become objects and, for realizing them, commands the services of instincts or propensities and emotions.

It is true that often conation and cognition develop independently and that the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge is not to be literally accepted. But the moral problem arises only when our conation does not follow our cognition, when our volitions refuse to be guided by reason. When a man knowing that the act, A, is good and B bad, wills B, he is immoral. Yet his intellect subserves his conation. But if this subservience is what is demanded of morality, then he is quite moral. Hence it is difficult to understand McDougall's claim that hormic psychology does not leave out ethics but supplies the best psychological basis for it.<sup>42</sup> It is true that some ethical writers have committed the mistake of separating the cognitive and conative functions completely. Yet it is not enough to stress their inseparability. McDougall treats conation as of primary, and cognition as of secondary importance. Inseparability of the two functions is inadequate, and primacy of conation defective as a psychological basis for ethics. Reason or intelligence as an ideal or purpose-builder should be acknowledged. Only when conation obeys reason does it become moral. Virtuous character is built up when conative tendencies obey reason, and the vicious when they become riotous and compel intelligence to be subservient. McDougall's psychology appears to explain the behaviour of animals, the building up of their character, because animal behaviour is not ethical.

In fact, it is not the recognition of purposiveness that renders a psychology dynamic. McDougall mentions Bergson in support of his doctrine.<sup>43</sup> But he seems to have forgotten or overlooked that Bergson calls teleology inverted mechanism. In mechanism the act

<sup>42</sup> *Psychologies of 1930*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



is merely a resultant of the given factors : the push is from behind or the past into the future. In teleology the act is the resultant of the pull from the future. McDougall by his admission of fixed goals clearly lays himself open to the charge of inverted mechanism. Yet, the instinct or drive is dynamic, not because of the goal, but because of its activity till it finds what its goal is, which is its satisfaction. The newly hatched chick does not peck at an edible object only but at all objects till it gets something it can swallow. Of course, it does peck, because the instinctive activity of hunger in that animal is of that type. Similarly, the human baby cries and throws about its hands and legs, not because it is instinctively aware of how to attract its mother or nurse, but because of the restlessness due to the disagreeable feeling of hunger. Woodworth seems to be nearer to truth when he speaks of 'drives' and 'sets' than McDougall when he speaks of goals of instincts. Perhaps it is better to understand instinctive activity as what is best suited to satisfy instinct than what is directed to certain objects or classes of objects. When a magnet draws iron filings towards itself we attribute dynamism not to the iron filings but to the magnet. Yet the iron filings are naturally directed towards the magnet. Dynamism consists in activity determined by itself. So also is the case of the civilized mind. It is dynamic, not because it strives towards ideals *given* to it by nature or civilization, but because it itself builds up its ideals towards which it struggles.

McDougall asserts : 'The Hormic theory projects a completely systematic and self-consistent psychology on the basis of its recognition of the whole of the organized mind of the adult as a structure elaborated in the service of the hormic urge to more and fuller life.'<sup>44</sup> Is this urge to 'more and fuller life' an instinct ? If the instincts are this hormic urge, then they must be directed to 'more

and fuller life' and not merely to certain fixed and natural goals. And if they are so directed, they must be inherently intelligent, for the 'more' in any given situation can be known only by intelligence and not by instinct as such ; or if instinct is said to know the 'more' it is a mistake to call it instinct. And in the higher stages of mental growth, when intelligence undergoes high development, instinct remains in the background and loses its guiding force. If the word instinct is used in the usual sense, then if the urge is to fuller life it is not directed simply to its natural goal and *vice versa*. Here McDougall is tacitly giving up his position. Fuller life is an ideal built up by intelligence. The study of human behaviour is psychology because of the presence of intelligence ; and the study of animal and plant behaviour is biology so far as it does away with intelligence.

The plea for the primacy of intelligence in mental life may be met by the objection that it tends to revive intellectualism buried long ago. But the objection can be met by pointing out that intelligence has to be understood differently here. We have been talking of conation and cognition as two different functions. McDougall also does so. Reasons are not lacking for this practice. The disproportionate and uncoordinated development of conation and reason in man is a familiar fact ; without it there would not have been the ethical problem. Yet it should not be understood that a highly thoughtful man lacks conation altogether. Even thinking hard requires conation. On the other hand, even the practical man has intelligence. Only, he uses his intelligence in pursuit of whatever good or evil ends he may have. If the activity of life and conation or what Spinoza calls *conatus* are identical, then intelligence is conation that is made reflective whenever there is a problem. It then performs what are called ideal experiments. It constructs a plan of the problem in itself, solves it ideally and, making that the purpose, moves on to

<sup>44</sup> *Psychologies of 1930* p. 31.

solve the actual problem practically. For a highly intellectual life there is always a problem and many an intellectual solution. But it generally does not execute the plan of action. Or its problems are always intellectual like the mathematician's. Intellect, therefore, is a builder of plans or patterns for execution. The ethical conflict arises when a pattern of action built up to comprehend the whole of the known situation is not followed but, at the urge of some isolated impulse, another pattern is built up which comprehends only a part of the known situation, and is preferred. What we call a conflict between conation and reason is really a conflict between the conation considering the whole situation and the same conation considering only a part. That the same conation can be two is only a matter of fact. Otherwise, there would not have been remorse. Conation when it reflects upon itself and constructs patterns or ideals of behaviour, is intelligence; otherwise, it remains simple conation.

It is the author's belief that the conception of intelligence as a pattern—or ideal-building activity will be most fruitful in social, educational, and other applied psychologies. Human mind is not merely a creature of the environment, natural or social, and its aim is not merely to survive in the environment by adapting itself to it; it wants also to create the most suitable environment by

shaping it according to its heart's content. If this kind of activity is recognized as characteristic of mental life, then it easily follows that intelligence, as an idea-forming activity, is its chief mark. We have only to insist that these ideals are built up in a concrete situation, and not in a vacuum.

It may be asked: If mind is thus creative, does it not imply absence of all determinism? If so, what method of explanation are we to adopt? Every explanation implies some determinism. If, to the question, Why does the thing behave thus? it is replied, it likes to behave so, no explanation is given of the behaviour. Hence, the question is, How is the activity of the human mind determined? In truth there is determinism everywhere. The determinism of material behaviour is mechanistic; the determinism of simple life is teleological; and the determinism of mental life is that of ideals. Teleological activity is mechanical as well; and activity determined by ideals is teleological also. Purposes are natural or *given* for mere life; but mind creates its own purposes. The ideals built for execution are of various stages. In the lowest, they may not transcend the merely sustenance or economic levels; but in the higher, they may even go against them. The growth of mental life is a growth of these ideals.

(Concluded)

## TAGORE AND THE TRADITIONAL THEORY OF ART

BY PRABAS JIBAN CHOUDHURY

Tagore's theory of art has many points of agreement with the traditional theory. By 'traditional theory' we mean the Christian or scholastic theory which was held as absolutely true in the medieval times by all Christians. Also it means the aesthetic theory current in

Vedic and Buddhist India, the latter theory being essentially the same as the scholastic theory.<sup>1</sup> We shall briefly note here certain points of similarity that are found between

<sup>1</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy: *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, chapters—II and X.

Tagore's aesthetic doctrine and the traditional one.

'The Scholastic doctrine of Beauty is fundamentally based on the brief treatment by Dionysius the Areopagite, in the chapter of the *De divinis nominibus* entitled *De pulchro et bono*.<sup>2</sup> A piece from this writing will show how the beautiful is regarded as the good also by the Christian theologians.

'The good is praised by sainted theologians as the beautiful and as Beauty; as delight and the delectable; and by whatever other befitting names are held to imply the beautifying power or the attractive qualities of Beauty.'<sup>3</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote a commentary on the essay of Dionysius the Areopagite, and his commentary had the title 'On the Divine Beautiful; and how it is attributed to God.' He also holds that beauty is but the attractive aspect of absolute perfection or God. The source of scholastic theory of beauty can be traced back to Plato. In *Symposium* he states that there is Absolute Beauty, while things of the world only participate more or less in this Beauty and are beautiful in a more or less degree; the ultimate reality is, according to him, Good, the absolute end or *summum bonum* of creation (this theory is to be found in the *Republic*, book VII, 534). Now it was natural for Plato to identify Absolute Beauty with Absolute good, for both (if different) cannot be absolute (i.e. entire, pure unmixed divine and co-essential with itself). So he says 'the Good is the Beautiful.' (*Lysis* 30).

Indian aestheticians of the past also held aesthetic experience to be something finer than sensation; it was called *rasasavadana* or 'the tasting of flavour' and also called the very twin of God, *brahmasavadana*. The experience of beauty is contemplative and not merely a sensuous pleasure.

Tagore also does not separate the good

from the beautiful. He says, 'That which is really good is both useful and beautiful, that is to say, it has a mysterious attraction for us over and above that of such purposes of ours as it may serve. The moralist declares its value from the ethical standpoint, the poet seeks to make manifest its unutterable beauty.'<sup>4</sup> Again, 'The Good, I repeat, is beautiful to us not merely because of any purpose it may serve. Bread is useful, clothes are useful, and so are shoes and umbrellas; nevertheless these do not thrill us with their beauty. But the fact that Lakshmana insisted on accompanying his brother Rama in his exile, makes our heart-strings vibrate in music. It becomes a theme fit to be sung into permanence with beautiful words set to a beautiful tune.'<sup>5</sup> Thus real beauty is real good for Tagore. This beauty is not mere charm that beguiles us temporarily by catering to our sensuous nature, rather it is a deeper experience which involves discipline and contemplation. Aesthetic satisfaction is not to be confused with merely emotional or sensational pleasures, it is a spiritual awakening and a joy divine. Tagore says, 'So we arrive at this, that ultimately beauty makes for discipline, so does discipline, in turn, make us more deeply conscious of Beauty.'<sup>6</sup>

Art, then, is not a matter of feeling only, but a kind of knowledge, that which is of a higher type than ordinary scientific knowledge. It requires *sadhana*, mental discipline. In this respect, too, Tagore's aesthetic creed resembles the traditional theory. Tagore says, 'I do not know details about *Yoga*, but we hear that the *yogis* could create by yogic powers. The creation by genius is of a similar kind. The poets, restraining their mind by virtue of their spontaneous power, and in a semiconscious manner, somehow attract the ideas, feeling, sights, colours, and

<sup>4</sup> *Sahitya*, p. 37. Translated in *Sense of Beauty* (published in *Vivha-Bharati Quarterly*, May, 1936).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 37. Translated in the essay, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 29, Translated in the essay, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by Coomaraswamy. *Ibid.* p. 45.

sounds to their souls, and collecting them there, build out of them a coherent and lively whole.<sup>7</sup>

The *Shukranitisara* says<sup>8</sup> that the image-maker should have a contemplative vision (*yogadhyana*) and should not directly observe any form or figure. The scholastic aesthetics also speaks of a contemplative primary act which should be followed by a secondary act of setting down what has been visualized in contemplation. The *Shukranitisara* also says, 'When the model has been conceived, set down on the wall what was visualized.'<sup>9</sup>

Thus inspiration is always a spiritual process, the artist is inspired by certain supersensible ideas; a sensible thing can only affect us, that is, raise sensational or emotional reaction. The inspiring agent is always spoken of as a spiritual power (Plato's Daimon, Immanent Eros, *Gandharva* of Indian aesthetics and *sanctus spiritus* of Christian theory). Plato says in *Ion* that the artist is possessed 'by a spirit not his own' and that 'it is God himself that speaks, and through them enlightens us; the makers are but His exponents according to the way in which they are possessed.' (*Ion* 334-35). In Indian aesthetics the *Gandharvas* (gods of love and music) offer to the voice (expressive power) their sacred science, the mundane deities offer things to please her. True art is significant and liberating (*padarthabhinaya* and *vimuktida*), while false art is coloured by passions and appeal to the uncultured and the commoners only. Tagore believes in the supernatural agency at work in artistic creations, and he distinguishes between the two types of art, 'highway' and 'pagan' so to speak. He says about the creative process in art, 'All this is a *yogasadhana*. As a poet composes a poem and as Tansen composes a

piece of music out of various tunes and rhythms, so does a woman construct her life, in the same semi-conscious and the same magical manner.'<sup>10</sup>

Again, 'The universal spirit breathes through the flute of our mind and sounds many a tune; literature tries to express these in clearer form. Literature is not, individualistic, it is not the author's, but a supernatural voice (*daiva-vani*).'<sup>11</sup>

In *Atmaparichaya*<sup>12</sup> Tagore speaks of a universal spirit that works through the poet and that alone understands the complete meaning of what is written.

Again, according to the traditional theory, the artist when inspired becomes one with the idea or the model he is to set down. 'Alike from the Indian and the scholastic points of view, understanding depends upon an assimilation of the knower and the known; this is indeed the divine manner of understanding, in which the knower is the known. Hence the scholastic and Indian definitions of perfect understanding as involving '*adaequatio rei et intellectus* or *tad-akarata*.' It follows that the artist must really have been what he is to represent. Dante sums up the whole matter from the medieval point of view when he says, 'He who would paint a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot paint it.'<sup>13</sup>

Now Tagore, too, holds a similar view. He distinguishes ordinary knowledge in which the knower remains outside the object known, from intuitive knowledge, in which the knower identifies himself with his objects of knowledge. This latter kind of knowledge is involved in artistic creation. Tagore says, 'We are continually knowing the world with our mind. That knowing is of two kinds. Through knowledge we know the object. In this the knower is in the background and the object of knowledge in front of him as his objective.

<sup>7</sup> *Panchabhut*, p. 171. (Translation mine).

<sup>8</sup> Coomaraswamy, *Op. Cit.* Chap. X. on *The Intellectual Operation in Indian Art*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> *Panchabhut*, p. 172.

<sup>11</sup> *Sahitya*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> pp. 3-6.

<sup>13</sup> Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.* p. 153.

Through intuition (*bhava*) we know but ourselves, the object remains united with ourselves and is but an apparent objective. Science is occupied with the task of knowing an object, and it struggles to keep back the human personality from itself. In literature man is engaged in the work of knowing himself, the truth of his knowing rests on his actual realization and not on the verity of any objective fact.<sup>14</sup>

For Tagore the reality is ultimately within us, so when we identify ourselves with the object we know but ourselves, the intuitive knowledge of things required in art is but a kind of self-knowledge. He believes in the upanishadic doctrine that there is in truth

nothing but the self, all else is evil.<sup>15</sup>

Tagore says, 'When my individual self knows the infinite Self by uninterrupted intuition, knows this through my heart, mind, and soul, then he realizes in him his own self also. This principle of spiritual discipline (*adhyatmic sadhana*) can be brought down to the field of literature.'<sup>16</sup>

This is a refinement on the traditional theory and a deeper view of the matter. What suffices for aesthetics is to recognize the identification in intuitive knowledge of the subject (the artist's consciousness) with the object (the idea or the model). Traditional aesthetics recognizes this principle, so does Tagore.

<sup>14</sup> *Sahityer Pathe* (VIII). (Translation mine).

<sup>15</sup> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, III. 4. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Sahityer Pathe*, p. 53.

## THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL STABILITY

BY A VEDANTIN

When, being convinced that God is the only abiding reality, we resolve to find Him, we undertake the most arduous task imaginable. Spiritual growth depends upon forming new habits of thought and action and upon learning new ways of knowing ourselves and others. By acquiring such habits and ways, the mind becomes fit to know God and experience His blessed being and qualities. But accustomed habits are not easily eradicated, and formation of new habits is difficult and often requires unremitting struggle, demanding both time and energy.

During the period of struggle, the mind is apt to become fatigued by its strenuous labour and to react against the disciplines imposed upon it. Our predecessors on the spiritual path agree that as long as our mind is not sufficiently pure and calm, there is

always a possibility of such fatigue and reaction. Therefore most of us may expect periods of varying duration when the way to God seems blocked and dryness settles on the mind. Under those circumstances it is natural for most of us to become discouraged and even tend to revert to worldliness.

Since it is only when we are truly established in God that dry periods can be avoided altogether, they are a real problem in spiritual life. Certain practices have been found generally effective in minimizing the painfulness and shortening the duration of such periods. Of these, the most helpful is the practice of what may be described as continuous God-consciousness. This practice may seem like an end in itself rather than a means to an end and therefore not easy to be followed by a soul in spiritual distress. As a matter

of fact it is both end and means and can be mastered by anyone who sincerely undergoes three important disciplines.

I. The first discipline, training of the mind, is most inclusive, for it means that the energies and functions of both mind and body must be controlled. The body, as we usually know it, is obstructive to spiritual illumination. So also is the intellect, as long as it is concerned with the world of the senses, whether in gross or subtle form.

Neither body nor mind, until controlled by higher consciousness, is of any help in finding God; therefore those who seek Him are instructed to think of themselves not as body and mind but as spirit. They must learn to abide steadfastly in the spirit and to control the unspiritual tendencies of both body and mind. For this reason spiritual aspirants undergo severe austerities, attempting thereby to bring every aspect of their being—physical, intellectual and emotional—under control.

Of the three, the most difficult to subjugate is probably the emotional nature, which is liable to overwhelm the aspirant and prevent him from thinking clearly and acting rightly, unless it is properly regulated and purified. Most, if not all, mental traits are energized by emotion. Therefore if the emotions are right, the mind also is right. Guided and purified, emotions can be powerful aids in the attainment of spirituality. Since they are subject to the laws of habit formation, patient practice can eventually bring even the most unruly and obstinate emotions under control and purify them.

William James explained in his essay, 'What is an emotion?' how unworthy traits can be corrected: 'There is no more valuable precept in moral education than this, as all who have experience know: if we wish to conquer undesirable emotional tendencies in ourselves, we must assiduously, and in the first instance, coldbloodedly, go through the outward motions of those contrary dispositions we prefer to cultivate.' The best way to conquer wrong habits of mind is to form

opposite habits deliberately, guided by the spiritual purpose.

II. The second discipline, constant application of the mind to God, follows naturally from mental control. The mind is not our true self but only an instrument, and the instrument must be perfected for our use. There are certain regular exercises which will help to mould the mind into spiritual form and thus enable it to apply itself to thoughts of God even when conditions are contrary.

(1) The most important means to this end is meditation, a practice of concentration whereby the mind is made to exclude all other thoughts and dwell on God alone. God may be contemplated in many different ways, and not each will suit every individual. Therefore meditation is most effective when done under the direction of a spiritual teacher: such a one, being able to determine the Divine Ideal most akin to the disciple's nature, can tell him what form of meditation is best suited to him.

Why should we meditate on one particular aspect of God and not on all His aspects? Will it not make our realization of God partial? And is not thinking of Him in any way beneficial?

No aspect of God, however specific, can be considered limited, for He is infinite not only as a whole, but also in every part. Therefore, on whatever aspect of Him the mind dwells—Divine Incarnation, sacred Word, an attribute such as all-pervasiveness, or Light—in every case ultimate perception of His infinity is inevitable.

It is true that to think of God in any way is helpful, but mere thinking will not do—if we want to realize Him we must meditate upon Him; and meditation, to be successful, requires that we should concentrate our mind on one single aspect of God continually. Until spiritual realization is attained the mind is restless, and diversity of thought, even regarding God, causes vacillation.

Meditating every day, year in and year out, diligently going through the same spiritual

process, the disciple inevitably achieves more and more steadiness despite all tribulations and vicissitudes. If the process were varied from time to time, the mind would fluctuate and never attain spiritual stability.

The aim of meditation being to exclude all other thoughts and dwell on God alone, meditation is successful when the disciple's mind, having become increasingly steady, is at last absolutely one-pointed. In that state of one-pointedness extraordinary experiences come; the mind becomes so still that nothing but the Divine Vision shines in the inmost recess of the soul, and all consciousness of the world's vibrating and everchanging phenomena vanishes in the Light. It is then that the qualities of God are revealed as they are in themselves, not as we usually conceive them. Words are inadequate to express them, for words are lost in the profound silence of rapture.

To attain this high state, many years of faithful, earnest, patient practice is required. But we know that if we persist in meditation and try to direct our energy, thought, emotion, and will toward God even when all seems dark and dreary, we prevent unspiritual influences from overwhelming our mind and at the same time prepare ourselves for the dawn of illumination. The practice of meditation negates all that is ephemeral and unreal in us. The false vision that usurps the place of truth and causes all our woes, vanishes when the mind is made to dwell constantly on the Divine Reality.

(2) If meditation for long hours at a time were possible, that alone would be enough to establish the mind in God-consciousness. Most spiritual aspirants, however, have many duties in the world and must engage in various activities. Some are active by nature, and it is not altogether unfortunate that they are so, for activity itself, properly guided, may gradually be transformed into spirituality. Most aspirants, moreover, find that they are not ready, physically, and

mentally, to undertake meditation for long hours every day. And even those who are naturally qualified or who have prepared themselves to spend long hours in meditation, are often prevented by circumstances from doing so.

Thus it happens that almost all, whether active by nature or not, must learn to feel God in and through activity. This may be accomplished in four ways: (a) by offering the fruits of action to God; (b) by practising to see God in everything; (c) by worshipping Him ceremonially; and (d) by serving Him directly.

(a) When we offer the fruits of our action to God we prevent that action from distracting our mind from spiritual consciousness. The sense of being the doer of action is an obstruction, and the anticipation of results from action is another. The spiritual aspirant must feel that he is an instrument in the hands of the Lord—that neither the wisdom, the skill, nor the power to act come from himself; consequently the fruits of action cannot be claimed by him, but must all, whether good or bad, be offered to the Lord to whom they really belong. Thus the aspirant, even when apparently busy with worldly work, is actually calm and peaceful within, knowing that nothing on earth or in heaven really pertains to him.

Is the incentive to work lost when this practice is followed? The aggressive, greedy, selfish incentive is indeed lost, but its place is taken by the pure desire to serve God in whatsoever way He wishes. As long as we live on earth we are active in one way or another, but in offering our every action—sleeping, eating, working, playing, worshipping—to God we become steadfast in our recollection of Him.

(b) When we try to see God in everything we saturate ourselves with the thought that God alone is real, that whatever we do is for Him and through Him. Perhaps the mind is averse to perceiving Divinity in those with

whom we live in worldly relationship; nevertheless it should be forced to think in this way again and again, until it realizes that everything and everyone is He.

We must not be discouraged if our efforts in this direction often seem unavailing. We do not expect an easy victory over the ever-restless mind even in meditation, and in meditation we are trying with all our being to perceive God. Why, then, should we expect the same mind to perceive God readily in the external world without repeated and zealous practice? Those who understand the necessity for consistent spiritual practice never complain of failure. Such complaints indicate that one either has yielded temporarily to unspiritual forces or has stopped struggling altogether because of self-pity. It is usually the latter, and this weakness has no place in the life of one who seeks God.

The continuous attempt to see God in everything, in spite of repeated reversals, is really a prolonged meditation. It not only extends the morning and evening contemplation, but confirms and supplants it throughout the remainder of the day.

(c) Though the third means of applying the mind to God through activity, namely, ceremonial worship, is great help, it is not universally practicable, as not all to whom this practice appeals can afford to perform elaborate ceremonies. However, most people can certainly make a few offerings regularly on altars in their own homes. God responds to our devotion out of His infinite love and accepts our flowers, incense and light when we offer them to Him. Although we use such ordinary objects in worship, in our mind they assume symbolic value, a deep spiritual meaning. Through them therefore we are made to feel close to God.

As Evelyn Underhill has said, the worshipper finds spiritual sustenance in significant ritual, because he feels the need of 'a bridge along which the Eternal Perfect may penetrate Time and the things of Time.' In performing even a simple worship, the devotee loses his

customary feeling of separation from God and becomes aware of His loving presence.

(d) The fourth means of apprehending God through activity—direct service to God—is one of man's highest privileges on earth. The fortunate ones who are able to serve God in churches and temples or in spiritual work of any kind can never quite forget His proximity even in their darkest moments. But to worship Him through service it is not necessary to be ostensibly working for him, great blessing though that is. The house-holder can live the life of earnest, faithful service to the Lord no less than the monk or nun, for there is never a lack of opportunity when one really seeks it.

Thus through the second discipline, application of the mind to God accomplished by means of the complementary practices of meditation and selfless action, the mind becomes more and more conscious of Him and at last firmly established in spiritual life.

III. Supplementary to the two disciplines already mentioned is a third, the practice of alertness. In this we wage a ceaseless, vigilant war against the tendency of our mind to turn from God to selfish pleasures, and are constantly on guard lest lower propensities of mind assert themselves. When detected in seed form they can be negated easily, and so the sooner they are noticed, the better.

It does not mean we are to be Puritans, solemn and dry, ignoring the beauty of art and nature. The truth is, we become more sensitive to aesthetic values as we grow in spirituality. But at the same time we neither avoid nor seek aesthetic joys, for they are only faint manifestations of the beauty and joy of God, not God Himself, who is the ineffable source of all beauty and delight and who alone is the object of our search.

There is one strange fact to be noted about spiritual life: we can never remain permanently in any one position in it, but are always moving either forward or backward. If a swimmer does not tread water even while he is resting momentarily in the current, he is carried downstream. It is the same in



spiritual life. If we relax too much and cease to be vigilant, we slip backward. Complacently resting from our spiritual labours, we are really going away from God rather than toward Him. He reveals Himself to those who prove their earnestness by strenuous effort, which even includes wisely directed rest and recreation.

To one who is just starting upon his spiritual journey, the three disciplines we have discussed may appear too comprehensive and

the task of practising them too difficult. But we are assured by the knowers of God that when a man filled with earnestness and humility tries to know Him, he does not have to depend upon his own efforts alone; God himself helps to remove his difficulties and gives him the necessary strength and wisdom. Therefore if we undertake our spiritual disciplines with faith in God, and with a sincere and yearning heart, we shall not fail.

## SOLITUDE

BY LIZELLE REYMOND

In the period of upheaval in which we now live, when everything jars and disappointment grows upon us, we readily build up an illusion for ourselves. 'If only I could get away, I would find joy.... Yes, but where shall I go?' Wearied with the noise and the crowds, you let desire invade you to be alone and to taste the joy of solitude. Solitude lures you like an oasis. In sheer opposition to all that you leave behind, you imagine a solitude that would be pure delight. We forget, however, that the chaos we are leaving remains within us in our most secret life. In these conditions, how can the two words, solitude and joy, be taken together? Those who have forsaken the world assure us it is possible. They know, they tell us, of a solitude inhabited, visited by God, and which is actually a withdrawal from life in order to converse with God and to live by His spirit. This is perhaps the archetype of joy which the painters of the quattrocento showed reflected in the faces adorning their triptychs. Perhaps joy existed in those days; I do not know, I did not taste it then. What I can say is that around me, amongst millions and millions of people who live 'outside of God', I have never encountered

it except in very young children. Nevertheless, pure joy does exist. It was the food of my life in India and I have brought back a warm and everlasting remembrance that to me has become very real.

As for this joy, I do not think solitude should be asked to reveal its secret. Joy is beyond solitude. Solitude is a crucible, and he who has been through it is no longer the same as before. When joy springs forth, there is no longer solitude. The word 'solitude' leaves no room for anything but the one who is 'alone'. There can be no question and no answer. God himself is silent.

But this solitude is a great adventure.

It should be approached with infinite gentleness, I would almost say, with a shade of tenderness. It is always frightening, although it is desired 'intellectually' by all who like agitation and complications. 'Ah! if only I were in your place!' But when they happen to give it a trial and realize that solitude is that consciously desired state in which there is no one we can share our thoughts with, no one to listen to us and admire our smallest actions, they soon hurry back. Having no spectator of any sort, the soul wrestles with

time and is tossed like a ball between causes and effects until all the rough edges are smoothed. It is a stern and direct discipline: When living 'in the world', one very rarely has an opportunity of putting solitude to the test. Here is the one that I tried: a little house in the heart of the forest, three miles from the village. No neighbours. No road but a rugged footpath; no gate, no closed door at night. The postman, as he brought the mail, left the loaf of bread on the table. The rest of my food was supplied by the goat and the hens and the garden. I often spent as much as three weeks without going to the village or talking to anyone.

How did I enter into this solitude?

By a very narrow and stony path. I had a hard struggle. Solitude nearly defeated me. Then I looked it squarely in the face and a real duel began. I made it my task to conquer it and I was prepared to pay whatever it might cost.

There are of course several ways to venture into solitude. The Golden Legend tells us of cohorts of men and women saints who have tried it; the white enclosures of convents hold the secret of detailed and subtle experimentings. In life in the world, there are unfortunately very few cases of a personal experience which can serve as an example<sup>1</sup>. Once again I appealed to India, where usually everyone at some time or other in his life goes in for solitude, following the theoretical teaching and practical instructions of some wise man. I humbly set my problem before me and let the skein unwind itself. Each stage to be cleared was plainly marked off. I will only deal with a few of them here.

Why are people so afraid of being alone, particularly at the approach of night, the most favourable time of all when, as the Hindus say, the air itself quivers with piety?

<sup>1</sup> I might quote that of Byrd at the South Pole; his book *Alone* extols man's struggle with himself.

The world of day sinks into the world of night. The great astral influence changes, bringing another rhythm. Man does the same. At that hour, children climb unto their mother's lap and want to be fondled; young animals seek their mother to be fed and to nestle between her paws. In India, this moment is called the 'hour of grace', and the sacred lights are lighted everywhere with a moving ritual, even in the booths amid the hubbub of the bazars. Here at home, the Angelus rings, but only a handful of believers respond to it in a moment of solitude born of prayer. The teeming multitudes, the numerous Christian nations all through the West, the toiling populations are no longer aware of this moment, no longer desire or feel the need of it. However distressing that may be, we must dare to recognize that we have completely dissociated the soul from the body just as we chased solitude out of our active life. The resultant callousness is the just price which we must pay.

The intellectual explains everything he does not understand by using more or less correct mental images, depending upon his power of expression. The countryman remains much more simple-minded, and the sensations he scarcely knows how to control are the only screen between him and his soul. That is why he acknowledges his 'fear' of the twilight and materializes it to the extent of seeing in it moving forms and of hearing voices; a shadow then assumes a density equal to that of a man. And this fear remains until the morning breaks. He bars and bolts his house. He lights the fire. He dreads the screeching of owls as much as the wind in the foliage. It is the fear of solitude—the least of all the solitudes—that which is met at the first gate.

Nevertheless, one must plunge into it as the baker plunges his arms into the dough, turning it over, spreading it out and kneading it. A man must measure the night as he measures the day. He then discovers that darkness

is not the opposite of the life he loves in the sun and that the absence of manifestations is not death. The earth basking in sunshine and the earth plunged in night are both steeped in the same solitude just as his soul within him that magnifies the Lord and his instincts that grovel in the mire are the same clay which he will work with his hands.

Lord, is not the solitude of twilight the courageous look on the workshop? The audacity to fathom the depth of the shadows to read the richness of the colours? The Hindu says: Meditate in this Holy Hour. Cast away all that you possess as so many garments that hinder you. Strip yourself. Lay aside your ornaments, your clothes, and your dirty linen. Strip yourself of everything. Give to your Lord all that you are in the whole of yourself, in good and in evil. Is it for you to choose your humble offering? Give to your Creator what He Himself has given you, without pride and without humility. Say to Him: 'Divine potter, fashion me:' Does the forest itself elect the tree with the straight trunk or the tree with the gnarled trunk? Do likewise, give of yourself with love. When you take up your garments again, you will easily know which of them you must wash in the river and beat on the stones in the living water....

## II.

There is another solitude which is pursued by making noise, no matter what noise, provided a voice answers the voice that speaks within the heart, and that is never silent, whether in daytime activity or in the dreams of sleep. One wishes both to hear it and not to hear it. It drives you from solitude and plunges you into it by a see-saw game which begins every time you are convinced you have found tranquillity.

Almost all monks have among their rules the following recommendation: 'From such and such an hour, keep the great silence within thyself.' They are helped in this by their director or their elders. Nevertheless,

many of them admit that 'it is a moment of terrible struggle.'

Have you noticed the complicated path taken by thought when it is out of control? It never stops. You may have calm gestures and be actively at work, and thoughts throb in your skull like water enclosed in a sluice. You feel imbued with an energy that is destroying you, and you know quite well, that a mere trifle might turn it into the constructive energy that would carry you forward. But how is one to go about it? I remember lying down heart-broken in a furrow in a field one day and crying out to heaven in my suffering. A few days previously, I had felt a profound joy on the same spot. Neither the sky nor my forest had changed, nor the powerful, majestic song of the earth. There was only myself, a poor human creature, who had carefully fenced myself off from the Creator—with a barrier of desires and intonances hindering the flow of life—instead of singing the divine Name of God:

The Hindu says: 'Repeat the Name of God ten thousand times, twenty thousand times a day, one forgets the Lord so easily....'<sup>2</sup>

The pious counsel makes us smile...., as well buy a prayer-wheel! So proud of our intelligence are we! It would irk us to put God between us and the world every moment, to let his Name hover upon our lips as naturally as the blood throbs in our veins without being noticed and without anyone thinking of it. Yet the Gospel says: 'Pray without ceasing.'<sup>3</sup> The Hindu teaches a technique which seems childish to us. It consists in repeating the name of God till it becomes like the breath which actuates life itself, an imperceptible beating of wings mingled with the breathing—the Name of God always present. Then, is it we who seek God or God who seeks us? In the relation that is set up, an infinitely secret relation like prayer that no longer has any words, a new solitude is born in which

<sup>2</sup> A word from Shri Sarada Devi

<sup>3</sup> Th. v,17.

every voice is silent—even the voice of God. The creature is now only a sensitive lyre that resounds in unison with the divine vibration.

### III

No doubt, what one tries to do in solitude is to bring God to oneself. What ambition! But everything invites us to it. The Christian Church has permitted the portrayal of God the Father as a venerable ancient-of-days, thereby affirming that any form is proper for reflecting the immutable Light. Only one thing matters—to possess a particle of it, to have it for oneself. And to achieve this, one must tempt God. All means are good. Moreover, God willingly lets himself be tempted! He is like a mother watching her baby offer her the sweetmeat that has been sucked and dropped on the ground time after time. Is the work of the grass that lifts itself up to cry out: 'I draw near unto Thee', or the work of the ant close-bound to the earth, of the same value as that of man? Man says: 'It is mine that counts because I was created in Thine image', but God may have quite a different opinion in this world of Nature in which He has manifested Himself in His power and according to His pleasure.

That is why in solitude, alone with himself, man has the daring to wish to reflect God in his soul, as the infinitely small can reflect the infinitely great. The child's blood responds to that of its mother, saps of like boles can mix. Why does not the human soul find spontaneously the divine soul? Because man puts between God and himself his thought, his reason, these precious instruments of separation before they also become for him instruments of reconciliation.

'Long after he has recognized his God and has offered himself as a holocaust to God', says the Hindu, 'the worshipper must make a submission even more detailed and much more minute; the submission of all the parts of his being until, in the remotest corner, nothing more stands in the way of divine

grace....' A slow submission in detail begins, and it is an arduous and delicate task. One gains ground one day and loses it the next. There is nothing so wily as the spirit that trumpets 'I believe.' Subterfuges abound like couch-grass in an abandoned vineyard. We must toil and labour, let the birds and the worms feed on our flesh and continue the painful process to the end!

Blessed is the solitude in which this regenerating work is carried on. All the obstacles encountered are so many opportunities for discipline. Sleep itself is no more than a means of plunging into the unconscious in order to master it.

To bring God to himself, man models and raises himself up to God. Man watches out for Him as a lover for his beloved; he is thirsty, he is hungry, he lives in delirium. Shri Ramakrishna felt God's breath on his hand, he saw His gaze. Why should not God manifest Himself to one who loves Him? The slow work that builds in solitude is a constant labour of love in which nothing is ever abandoned, in which no sacrifice is ever made that is not rewarded a hundredfold.

### IV

This reaching up of man towards God, the descent of God towards man, can only be achieved in solitude, the 'mould' of the sublime ravings in which exaltation and anguish, the vision of the lights of heaven and the shades of hell, are close to one another. It is the years of life spent in a cave or in the forest by the many wise men of India, it is also Saint Anthony wandering in the desert, a prey to manifold temptations, the steep and painful ascent of Christian saints. On the rock of his faith, with no other weapon than his feeble ego which he believes to be strong, man becomes a giant in order to conquer himself. It is a struggle which cannot have any witness, and in which, at a certain moment, the struggler becomes the spectator of himself, and in which he suddenly perceives

quite clearly the dualities that hold him in their grasp : on the one hand personal God (as understood by the Hindu—*Ishvara*, Krishna) whom he has created for himself in order to adore Him, and on the other, Satan whom he likewise needs in order to disown him. Then, before the immensity that he discovers—an immensity without end or beginning—he has no other support than the very solitude which he feared. It becomes his ally. It becomes the closed field of his labour where all the roots of the human sentiments that were still vibrating are broken. It is also the divine compassion in which the worn-out wrestler eagerly slakes his thirst.

On the human plane, the whole cosmos becomes the 'centre' of his security. Has man utterly forgotten that his life, that is to say, that which differentiates him from the state of death, is the very thing which links him with the perceptible mode of God, with God himself in His essence of manifestation ? If he knows that 'all is That', he knows also, by entering into himself, that 'he is also That' in the lower universe where he too can play a creative role, at his will, reflecting in his tiny understanding a particle of the sublime understanding of the Creator. If he can watch young puppies play and laugh at their fight for the same bone, will he be able to understand that God watches His creatures besmirch the precious goods he has entrusted to them, with the same unconcern as that which we have for the puppies ? We, in our egotism, say : 'Will God permit another war ?' and at the same time, with the greatest sang-froid, we sow discord and death around us even in the details of our daily life without troubling to remember that every gesture we make invites the same gesture in return.

If, in the narrow sphere of my life in the country, I bring in a cat to keep away the rats, if I expect the hens to eat the grasshoppers, and the cockerel to fight against the sparrow-hawk, can I expect, above myself, the law of struggle to cease, because that is

what I would like ? Does not the cockerel with his jutting spur also think : 'Will God again permit other sparrow-hawks to attack me ?' One must be a good loser when it is one's fate to lose. An act is the arrow shot by the bow. It cannot halt in its consequences and will reach its target with the precision desired by the archer. Why not recognize our responsibility in the great game of God in which we like to create constantly, as He does, because we are the life itself which He has breathed into us ?

But God creates by love. His sacrifice is to manifest Himself without end in form, to project Himself, to give Himself, while in his own creation man, on the contrary, aims above all at separating himself from the divine work and establishing his power of death in full liberty. By competition, by appetite, he sets up his limited sovereignty over everything he sees weaker than himself, and in so doing, builds even higher barriers between God and himself. Separated from God, man is essentially a creator of death. In ten thousand men, how many are there who, in life, have not pushed aside their neighbour in order to take his place ? In ten thousand women, how many are there who have not killed their unborn child in order not to be bothered with it ?

Man demands of God a law of love and claims for himself the exercise of the law of death. If the din of the world drives the remembrance of this law from his mind, solitude gives him a tremendous vigour. It forbids the hypocrisy which expediency teaches us and which a complacent moral code has ended by accepting. Between the two movements constantly in action—that of man towards God and that of God towards man—the seeker knows there is no other solution than to retire from the battlefield where he moves and to withdraw into the 'immobility' that is beyond dualities. This immobility is the perfect solitude in which there are no more struggles and no more joys, no more

obstacles and no more rewards. The human soul immerses in the divine soul as a drop of water given back to the ocean—there is now only passivity for action fallen back into itself, or, better still, form returned to the undifferentiated.

The divine solitude in which That irradiates is pure joy, the *ananda* of the Hindu. Words fail to describe this state which surpasses all that the intelligence can try to express.

Before attaining this perfect solitude, there are jungles and deserts to be traversed one after the other. All solitaries know this. The white walls of cells are the scene of weird phantasmagorias, which the forcibly detained prisoner also sees behind his bolted door. For the one, they are degradation, and for the other, exaltation. The Hindu does not drive them away. He is without the possibility of casting this burden on to the shoulders of the Son of man who walks before him. As a beggar drags his pouch after him, he will take stock of it, and with his sole strength will neutralize every element without destroying it. His supplication goes to Shiva, the Lord whose throat is blue because he drinks the poison of the world: 'Lord, grant me discrimination....' There is no fear in this appeal; there is the intrepidity that conquers illusions, the love of liberty that plunges into the subconscious.

In order to get there, the solitary chooses a sharp and imperative discipline in which he will not fail. The greater the solitude, the more rigid will be the discipline, because the slightest element of disorder leads to the destructive intrusion of unsatisfied desires, repressed demands. What a formidable procession! Evil rises up with such acuity that monks have seen it take shape and overwhelm them. The Hindu knows that this

evil is as much his own as his passion for renunciation; both are the same energy demanding its right. What he has to do is to seize it, to master it and to direct it without depriving it of its virulence. The *yoga* is a path towards the goal and a means of bringing balance into the spiritual life; it is in no way a maceration of the body or the death of the elements of storm.

The price of solitude is that the dregs of the obscurities of the ego rise to the surface. But any depression which would impede the transformation of the being is a sin in the proper sense of the word—a rejection of association with God's work toiling within His worshipper.

On the contrary, we must open the eyes of our intelligence in order to regulate the body, and interrogate the passions of the body in order to compensate the pride of reason. All is proportion. The chaos let loose in man's ego is no different from that of God's great world of Nature with its storms that uproot trees and cause springs to burst forth. In solitude, the soul, alone with itself, has the unique chance of returning to the life involuted in itself and of feeling the throb of the rhythm of divine Harmony.

In this very last submission, the being emerges from the beating down of the ego with a cry of victory—it is the whiteness of the almond tree blossoming when winter is over. The solitude which clothed the struggle disappears little by little. In the silence which was its sphere, it becomes melody. In the isolation which was the forest or cell, it becomes joy of union with God. Halleluia! The solitary has emerged from solitude. He has surpassed himself so as to become all hearts that beat, all intelligences that think and all hands that work. He is also the sap in every plant and the rain from every cloud.

The throb of his heart is the pulse of Life.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Sj. Prabas Jiban Chaudhury, with whose thought-provoking and lucid contributions our readers are familiar, shows in *Tagore and the Traditional Theory of Art* the affinities between Tagore and the traditional conception on the subject of aesthetics. . . .

*The Way to Spiritual Stability* offers practical hints to deal with the periods of dryness which seem inevitable in our spiritual journey.

### CHAOS IN INDIA

Looking at the Indian scene today a psychologist would say that the mind of the people has become negatively conditioned. Widespread strike, indiscipline, insubordination, and corruption certainly reflect this attitude. There are doubtless grievances and hardships, economic and otherwise, which cause unrest, but they do not reasonably explain all such manifestations. There is lack of a positive attitude and of consciousness of social solidarity. Sectional interests threaten the general interest. Groups which hold key-positions in the community and are so situated that they can at will put the life of the whole people in jeopardy seem bent upon using this advantage not for the redress of just grievances but for selfish gain at the cost of the general interest. But sections of the Indian people who are actually undergoing the greatest privation are not so vocal and organized and seem to be at the mercy of these organised groups. Indian politics of today hardly reflects the social realities of the situation. For this reason a tiny section is able to hold the entire community to ransom. Trade Unions cover only a small part of our people, but these organizations do not mind holding up production or transportation which can only injure general interest and may plunge the entire country in irretrievable

chaos, from which they will also not be able finally to escape. But at the moment a short-sighted spirit of bargain prevails.

Worst of all, this lack of a positive conception and of general responsibility is invading a field which, above all, must remain immune from it—we mean the educational sphere. Trade union methods do not suit the field of education, as they do not suit the army and the civil servants. The recent strike of teachers of the U.P., now happily ended, is an ominous sign. The teachers no doubt have grievances, and we are sure the Government is fully alive to these. The teachers hold a most responsible position in the community. In a sense it is *the* most responsible position. They are entrusted, above all, with the task of building up the character of their pupils, the future citizens and leaders of the community. If the students find that the teachers lack the very qualities which they teach, the former will never learn virtues through verbalistic efforts. Character is transmitted by character, it is not learnt from books.

Such remarks apply to students also. Active politics must not be their field, as active politics cannot be the pursuit of civil servants or the army, without destroying the foundations of authority without which no society can survive.

It is true teachers are often underpaid and their life is hard. It is essential that they should be given proper wages so that they may serve honestly and without grievance. Nobody will deny this, but it is also true that such wages cannot but be determined by overall considerations of the general interest. Besides, grievances can be put forward in a disciplined manner. Redress of just grievances cannot be long withheld under present conditions. The educational sphere must be inspired by a high sense of idealism. It cannot stand on a level with other institutions.

The widespread spirit of indiscipline, as we have already said, cannot be traced to economic roots alone. It is the symptom of a deeper disorder within the soul of the modern individual. We have carried over into the days of our freedom not only the negative attitude of mind we practised in pre-freedom days but also the unspiritual outlook that we have imbibed through Western education. There is lack of a moral sense rooted in spiritual convictions. It is of course true that in our complex society general interest seems remote from our sectional ones. This is one cause of our social apathy, but it is not enough to explain the unintelligent actions of the groups and individuals. At bottom the problem is one of loss of traditional values. We have lost the sense of human dignity and of self-respect. If we fail to recover it our society will go to pieces. If man lacks a sense of inner worth, if he fails to see that there is in him something more valuable than all he can possess, he will never be good or offer his best to society. The real problem is how to restore to our people this sense of inner intrinsic worth that has been destroyed by material values. The tragedy of the modern man is that he requires to be convinced by means of elaborate arguments and a preten-

tious jargon that he is more than an animal!

Unless this spiritual blindness is cured, no remedy is going to help us. Anarchical forces which dwell in the savage major part of everyman are today seeking undisguised outlets in the name of communism and self-expression. The savage has found a reason for the irrational. Such forces can be met only by spiritual strength born of true faith and reason. We need appropriate institutions and laws to awaken us to the spiritual truth of our personality. Good conduct is the fruit of a long process of culture; it is never automatic. What is automatic is the gesture dictated by glandular secretions. We have to base our education on this truth of man. If man is more than a mind, can there be any justification for neglect to develop his spiritual potentialities in our schools and colleges?

Modern society, however, seems completely to neglect this aspect of education. Go to a town and watch the life of an average town-dweller there. You will find hardly anything which suggests the possibility of existence of any reality beyond sight and touch. It is all sensation. Can any character come out of a society which forgets that man is a spiritual agent and has values to strive for which are not of this world?

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**RAMAKRISHNA: PROPHET OF NEW INDIA.**—TRANSLATED BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. Published by Harper & Brothers, New York. Pp. 304. Price \$3.50.

This is an abridged edition of the larger and complete *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated a few years ago from the original Bengali by Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York. Last year the Religious Books Round Table of the American Library Association judged it to be one of 'fifty outstanding religious books for the year' (May 1947—May 1948). The book 'offers the Western (as well as the Eastern) reader a penetrating view into the authentic spiritual wisdom of a Hindu prophet of modern times. Here are intimate revelations of spiritual truth from a sensitive and disciplined mystic; here is

an uncommonly deep and broad understanding of the fundamental harmony of religions; here are vivid descriptions of India's genuine spiritual culture; here are helpful instructions about new modes of spiritual perception for everyday living.'

This abridgement was done for two main reasons: 'First, the regular edition contains many references to Hindu mythology and folklore with which the general Western reader is unfamiliar, as well as discussions of certain recondite aspects of Hinduism. These features create unnecessary difficulties. Second, the regular edition being a complete translation of all the authentically recorded conversations of Sri Ramakrishna, contains repetitions which are largely responsible for its one thousand and sixtythree pages. It is not convenient



to carry such a book around or to use it for daily devotional study. The abridged version removes the difficulties, yet without in any way minimizing the importance of the regular edition. On the contrary, it is hoped that the present volume may stimulate the reader's desire to read all the recorded words of Sri Ramakrishna.'

The book contains an elaborate introduction containing a brief account of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and other facts necessary for an appreciation of his life and teachings. There is a foreword by Aldous Huxley. It is beautifully got up and printed and handy.

**NEGATIVE FACT, NEGATION, AND TRUTH.** BY ADHAR CHANDRA DAS. *Published by the University of Calcutta. Pp. 292.*

This is a scholarly dissertation on abstruse logical topics addressed to specialists. To a common reader it will appear to be much ado about nothing and mere logic-chopping. Certainly much of our philosophical acumen is inhuman in this that it is engaged in polemics of a very narrow and special kind, mostly arising from and sustained by ambiguous use of words. The author's view of negation is quite sensible and an intelligent lay man feels that the philosophers he has criticized reached, through too much thinking, wrong views of the matter, which gave the author a scope for an elaborate refutation of these. This is not to minimize the importance of philosophy, and particularly this book, as criticism of false views; what strikes one is the enormous number of false and pseudo-views which intellectual philosophy breeds. This variety raises and demolishes many thought-structures giving us a feeling of vanity or dry discourse which, Shankara truly saw, has no ground (*pratishtha*) of its own. The present book unfortunately reminds one of this—while it delights him as an excellent intellectual irritant. The author has enthusiasm for his subject and displays learning, subtlety, and insight. We do not propose to enter the contents of the book which includes many topics (not well-knit together), associated with negation and truth. We may only offer a few comments of our own. *First*, the author would have done well if he explicitly mentioned and discussed the Indian theories of negation and truth which have directly influenced his thought. *Secondly*, he has by-passed symbolic logic which has a vast and important literature bearing on his subject. He has consulted Russell, of course, but not other and more recent thinkers of his line. *Thirdly*, the author says that negation of a negation is meaningless (p. 135). He has not discussed, not even referred to, the Marxist theory of negation of a negation which has gained so much importance in modern thought.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

**THE THEISM OF NYAYA-VAISESIKA: ITS ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT.** BY C.

BULCKE, S. J. *The Oriental Institute, 146, Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta 12. Pp. 58. Rs. 5.*

It is a happy sign that scholars are today devoting themselves seriously to a more intensive study of the *Nyaya-prasthāna* of Indian Philosophy. The present well-documented monograph is a valuable addition to the understanding of the evolution of the idea of God in the systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. In a brief space, the learned author has attempted a critical exposition of the metaphysical problems in respect of the position and nature of God in these systems. In so far as the problems have been barely touched upon in the *Sūtras* and have undergone elaboration in the subsequent exegetical literature of the systems, his treatment of the problems cannot but be chronological to a great extent. This is evident from the general set-up of the work which, from chapter four onwards, devotes a good deal of attention to the interpretation of texts and commentaries. The author in the Preface declares his 'set purpose' to avoid all reference to Western philosophy in his exposition. By avoiding such a course, the author invites the reader to concentrate on the dialectical niceties of Indian thought, and we must admire the intellectual detachment which makes such objective presentation possible for a Westerner. In the first three chapters the reader has the further advantage of being introduced to the empirico-rationalistic standpoint of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, before embarking upon the thesis proper. In his exposition and evaluation of the positions of the different writers, the author shows sympathy and independence of judgment, although one may not always agree with his conclusions. For instance, in his exposition of the Nyāya theistic *Sūtras* the author avers (p. 30, fn.1) that the *Sūtras* favour the view that Gautama was a theist. But the various divergent interpretations of the *Sūtras* leave enough room for doubt whether the admission of God in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika metaphysics is strictly demanded by a logical necessity. The fact of the matter seems to be that Gautama accepts the existence of God on belief, while the concept of God as a cosmic metaphysical principle is a later development. The author professes in the Preface to confine himself to Vāchaspati Miśra; yet in chapter six, he analyzes in detail Udayanāchārya's classical theistic arguments only to show that all the eight proofs for the existence of God are borrowed from earlier writers. But the Nyāya-Kusumāñjali is remarkable not merely for 'the refutation of rival theories' as the author opines, but also for the position which Udayana vindicates for the first time in Nyāya literature that philosophical speculation is a kind of worship of God. These, however, are minor matters, and it is to be hoped that this well-planned little volume will be enthusiastically received by the thinking public.

MAKHANLAL MUKHERJEE

**THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO—PART FOUR:**  
By NOLINI KANTA GUPTA. Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, G.T., Madras. Pp. 79. Price Rs. 1/4.

Sri Aurobindo is one of the great living personages in India, whose writings are read by a large public. But his style is generally too lofty for many, so the need for brief and simple statement of his views is real.

In *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, of which this book is the fourth part, the author gives an account of *Yoga* as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo in a very lucid manner, which holds the interest of the reader. Here one finds an attempt to synthesize all the spiritual realizations and aspirations of yore and the modern search after truth, represented especially by science, which has also been the attempt of other Indian thinkers since Ram-mohun Roy.

The main point stressed in this book, 'The core of Sri Aurobindo's *Yoga* ... is the mystery of Divine Descent—Spirit descending into Matter and becoming Matter, God coming down upon earth and becoming human, and as a necessary and inevitable consequence, Matter rising and being transformed into Spirit and man becoming God and Godlike.' The author, we feel, makes too bold a statement when he says, 'This is a truth that has not been envisaged at all in the past...' Sri Aurobindo doubtless sheds revealing light on many old ideas which remain generally obscure today and on the technique of *Yoga*; he has certainly made some dark corners bright. But all these are a different question altogether. Here and there in the book the author himself makes certain observations which contradict his above categorical statement.

This point apart, the book will be a highly useful one to all interested in higher life and thought.

**SRI AUROBINDO AND INDIAN FREEDOM:**  
By SISIRKUMAR MAITRA. Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, G.T., Madras. Pp. 80. Price Rs. 1/8.

Sri Aurobindo was one of the earliest and foremost fighters for the freedom of India. If the part he has played in the national struggle is little known to the present generation, it is not because his contribution is in any way less than those of others, but because he retired early from politics so that he could work at the roots which not only enliven and energize all aspects of the activities of man and lead to happiness, but also elevate man to a higher level. It is a mistaken notion to think that only those who work on the actual field of politics are the liberators of the nation. Those who work deep below, though unperceived, are much more so, and the results they obtain are more enduring. If Aurobindo retired from politics, in which he made a mark, it is because he saw these points clearly. And he saw, too, a deeper meaning of bondage and freedom.

In this book, the author presents the part played by Sri Aurobindo in the politics of the country and his contribution after the change over in 1909, when he began to see man as Man and not as any countryman. He wanted the freedom of India so that she might elevate the world. Sri Aurobindo says: 'The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. Of that task politics is a part, but only a part. We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, nor to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but we include all these in one entity which we believe to be all-important, the *dharma*, the national religion which we also believe to be universal. There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the eternal religion.' (p.60).

**LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA.** By Jagadish Chandra Jain. New Book Company Ltd., 188-190 Hornby Road, Bombay. Pp. 420. Price Rs. 35.

This book is the result of laborious and painstaking research carried on by the author under the most adverse conditions. Nevertheless he has achieved a great measure of success in bringing under suitable headings in as connected a form as possible the various details relating to life in ancient India which are found scattered in Jaina literature. It will prove an invaluable work of reference to all scholars in ancient Indian history.

The price of Rs. 35 is not excessive, considering the nature of the publication. The printing and get-up are good.

**SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE:** Fourth Number. Published by Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay. Pp. 165. Price Rs. 6.

These Numbers are studies in Aurobindian philosophy and literature. The Fourth Number is a worthy successor to the previous ones. There are many thoughtful articles which are worth reading. There is also an article in right Aurobindian style against 'Maya'—an almost regular feature of these numbers. Whether the readers agree with the conclusion or not of Aurobindian philosophy, they will find his ideas stimulating as they are often couched in terms of modern thought and science.

**DELHI DIARY.** Navajivan Publications, Ahmedabad. Pp. 406. Price Rs. 3.

These after-prayer speeches of Gandhiji were delivered in Noakhali, Calcutta, and in Delhi—in the most dis-

turbed period of the country; and represent the last phase of his thought.

One whose mind is never perturbed even by the greatest calamities and who can view all things in a sober and calm way, is indeed rare. But still it was true of Gandhiji, and every page of this volume bears witness to the calm repose of the mind of Mahatmaji, whose life was a dedication to peace and goodwill.

**SELECTIONS FROM GANDHI.** By NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE. *Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.* Pp. 311. Price Rs. 4.

As Gandhiji himself said of them, these selections show the thoroughness with which the author has gone into his subject. These are culled out from different sources and arranged under various headings. Gandhiji has treated, perhaps, all phases of human life, with the idealism and fervour characteristic of him. And hence every one can profit by this book. The index is also very helpful.

**HIMALAYAS—THE ABODE OF LIGHT.** By NICHOLAS ROERICH. *Nalanda Publications, Post Box No. 1363, Bombay.* Pp. 180.

This fanciful book of art by Roerich on the glories, and spiritual awareness of the Himalayas will be of great interest to all lovers of art and philosophy. The appeal is increased by the many paintings on Himalayan beauty by Roerich.

### HINDI

**ARYASAMSKRITI KE MOOLADHAR.** By ACHARYA BALADEVA UPADHYAYA. *Published by the Manager, Sharada Mandir, Banaras.* Pp. 428. Price Rs. 5-8.

This book deals with the sources of Indo-Aryan culture. The supreme endeavour of this culture from times immemorial has been to find an answer, rational and verifiable, to the question—*kasminnu bhagavo vijnate sarvavidam vijnatam bhavati?*—'Revered Sir, by knowing what (Supreme Principle) all this manifested (phenomena) becomes known?'—a question which was posed in the *Vedas* at the very start of philosophic enquiry in India. And efforts have been consistently directed towards discovering that One Supreme Principle and expressing It in all aspects of life and thought. The results of this endeavour constitute the music of Indian culture throughout the ages, the leading note of which is the perception of Unity in Diversity.

Pandit Baladeva Upadhyaya, the author, has brought all the manifestations of the Indian mind under the comprehensive term 'Arya' and has given the name *Aryasamskriti* to this culture. In this book he tries to give 'a brief but authentic' account of the various scriptures and other literature which are the foundation on which the mighty structure of this *Samskriti* rests. The author is a great Sanskrit scholar and is also

well versed in other Indian literatures. He has a good knowledge of Western and other cultures too. He is conversant with the traditional method of interpretation of the scriptures and restores to us, following a band of illustrious pioneers, the grand meaning and aim of these scriptures, which have generally been interpreted in accordance with the ideas of the Westerners.

Yaska has said in his *Nirukta* that every passage in the vedic scriptures can be interpreted in three ways: *adhibhautika*, *adhidivaika*, and *adhyatmika*—that is, as referring to nature, gods, or Spirit. According to one's development and need one will understand the meaning of passages in one of these ways. The Western system of interpretation has almost always tried to give a naturalistic explanation, often palpably forced, of many of the sublime passages.

The author has given us a lucid account of the contents and meaning of the literature of our culture. He combines traditional interpretation with upto-date methods of historical research. He deals with the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas*, *Vedangas*, *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Darshana-shastras*, *Dharmashastras*, *Tantras*, the *Bauddha* and the *Jaina canons*. There are, further, an introductory chapter on *Samskritika Svarup* (Characteristics of Culture) and a concluding one on *Samskriti ka Pran* (The Life of Culture). By going through the book one not only catches the ancient spirit of our scriptures but gets as well a knowledge of their vastness and richness.

The language is simple and clear. The book, 'the first of its kind in *rashtrabhasha*', fulfils a great need at a time when a common outlook on Indian culture has become such a great necessity.

**GANDHI SAHITYA SUCHI (GANDHIANA).** COMPILED BY P. G. DESHPANDE. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.* Pp. 239. Price Rs. 3-4.

As the title suggests, this book is an index to the writings by and on Gandhiji. The list covers nearly three thousand publications in English and other Indian vernaculars, arranged alphabetically and topically, giving particulars of publisher, price, etc. This result of several years of labour is justified in view of the immensity of Gandhian literature and the position that Gandhiji holds in the minds of the people of the world. The list is, however, far from complete. Efforts are continuing to make it as exhaustive as possible. This is only an interim production, and it needs no apology for its publication.

**KALYAN—NARI-ANK.** *Gita Press, Gorakhpur.* Pp. 800. Price Rs. 6-3 As.

The *Kalyan* publications are doing great work in spreading Hindu culture through its magazines and special numbers. We are glad to note the present *Women Number*, recently published, where the greatness and glories of our women from the very ancient days

up to recent times have been dealt with, with great learning and in detail. India had always held women with utmost regard and respect, and as Swami Vivekananda says, only that race which honours women can progress. This richly illustrated number is sure to be of great value to all who want to learn about the high position and achievements of the Indian women in the past. It also gives an account of some other famous non-Indian women.

#### BENGALI

**HINDU DHARMA.** By SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA. (*Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta*). Pp. 274. Price Rs. 3.

This is a brief but lucid introduction to the religion of Hinduism. This religion, being a rich complex of apparently conflicting faiths, requires great insight on the part of an author who seeks to offer a just interpretation of it. Swami Nirvedananda fully possesses that insight, by virtue of which he has brought out the essential unity behind the superficial diversity in Hinduism. While stressing this fundamental unity he has ably justified the diversity on the ground of differences in tasks and temperaments of men and also in their capacities for spiritual discipline (*adhikaravada*). The means are different but the end is the same for all—the realization of the human soul as the Universal Spirit, Brahman, and of the world as a veil to it. Swamiji rightly points out that though the ultimate goal of a Hindu is to forsake the world his path lies through acceptance (*pravritti marga*). Hence rituals, which are practised for some worldly gain, have a positive though limited value. They purify the soul. The author is

not a blind conservative. While believing that we should be true to our ancient creed he agrees that changes are needed from time to time in many outer forms of this creed. His views on caste system and other controversial points are quite progressive. He has described and critically appreciated the different paths and faiths within Hinduism with impartiality and sympathy. But he has also cautioned us against the difficulties and dangers of imageless worship, *Yoga* and *Tantra*, and has generally recommended normal modes of approaching God. Without being pedantic he has given a scholarly interpretation of Hindu metaphysics, the concepts of God, soul, and the world. We can safely recommend this book to the reading public.

P. J. CHAUDHURY

#### MALAYALAM

**WHAT IS HINDUISM?** By T. K. KRISHNA MENON. *Kumaralaya, Ernakulam, Cochin State*. Pp. 93. Price Re. 1.

Sri Krishna Menon is already famous in Kerala through his various literary activities. As a scholar and as a man of religion, he tries to answer the question, What is Hinduism? In these times when so much thought is being given to the question of religion, it is timely that Sri Menon comes out with this book, summing up the great and eternal values of our ancient religion. Without any narrow ideas, he deals with the subject with scholarship and with great conviction. And we are sure this will be of great benefit to the youth of our day whose ignorance and neglect of its own religion is sad and shameful.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY OF THE STUDENTS' HOME, CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, AND LECTURE HALL.

The foundation stone laying ceremony of the Students' Home, Charitable Dispensary, and Lecture Hall of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay, was celebrated at 9 a.m. on Sunday, 9 January 1949 in the Ramakrishna Mission premises. The function commenced with the chanting of vedic prayers by the students of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home. Swami Sambuddhananda, while welcoming the distinguished guests of the morning, referred to the development of the different activities of the Mission during the last few years. He also explained the necessity of supplementing academic education by man-making and character-building training as preached by Swami Vivekananda.

While laying the foundation stone of the Students' Home, Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher, Premier of Bombay, delivered a short speech, which is given below:

Swamiji, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be amongst you on this auspicious occasion to lay the foundation stone of the Students' Hostel. Everything connected with the venerable names of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda is holy and sacred, and I rejoice to assist in the work.

The local Ramakrishna Mission has a long and proud record of social work to its credit. It runs a charitable dispensary which treats a large number of patients every year. Its Library and Free Reading Room meet the intellectual needs of hundreds of suburban residents. Through the dark days of the War and the darker ones that followed the Mission kept up its good work unflinchingly. Its Students' Hostel which so long sheltered

only fifteen students, will now have a spacious building of its own, which can take in many more. This would be a great service to the community indeed. The scarcity of accommodation in Bombay has resulted in great hardship to its student population because the minimum privacy essential for serious study is not available. The Government have been fully aware of the urgency of the problem. We have just started a Hostel for University students at Bandra, and the construction of the new buildings for the Girls, Hostel and the Elphinstone College Hostel is already under progress. But the magnitude of the problem calls for increasing effort from all quarters. The Ramakrishna Mission deserves the gratitude of our student-world for coming forward to do what it can in this urgent matter. If the gratitude of the parents and guardians of students does not merely remain a matter of words but takes a concrete shape, this building should not be long in coming.

This Mission has nothing sectarian about it. It is open to all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. It celebrates the anniversaries of the prophets of different faiths. With reverence for all to whom it is due, this institution rises above the pettiness from which religious sectarianism suffers. The only religion it preaches is the Universal Religion of the Vedanta, which stands for harmony and not for dissensions—for realization and not for wrangling. Religion has so often been the arena for wars and hatreds that it is refreshing to be reminded that it should be the meeting ground of unions and sympathies. And with the Mission, religion is not mere abstraction. It is translated into service—the service of the people. The missions of the West have built up through the centuries a glorious tradition of service; and we too, have our heritage of self-effacing service. In these new times we need a synthesis of the best that is in both. Institutions like this Mission will help us to achieve it.

As I said at the outset, with this Mission are associated such revered names as those of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. These names stand for the higher values of life—for all that enriches us spiritually. Between them, they symbolize the blend of noble thought and vigorous, purposeful activity. Blessed by this inspiring background, this Mission is destined to go from one triumph of service to another.

The need of good hostels for our University students is, however, not a mere material need—a matter of brick and stone. Our educational system, so far, has been soulless. Books are crammed and examinations passed with a pathetic faith. The higher the examination, the more remunerative the job one is likely to get. The Sadler Commission was right in speaking of the 'anaemia' of the system. It lacked fullness and vitality. In this mockery of education, the cultural and the spiritual aspects were utterly neglected. The system afforded no

opportunities for that intimate contact of more highly evolved minds with others less evolved which alone makes for improvement. Such intimate contact can be developed only in well-conducted hostels. The need for such hostels is particularly great in cities like Bombay and Poona, and I have no doubt that the Ramakrishna Mission is not only meeting this adequately, but also helping to train the mind and character of its inmates properly.

The late Dr Rabindranath Tagore said: 'Perfect freedom lies in the perfect harmony of relationship which we realize in this world—not through our response to it in *knowing* but in *being*.' The knowledge we seek through examinations is too frozen to vitalize our life. At its best it is a private possession, at its worst a dead weight. It fails 'to form the mind' in the context of greater things. Minds are best formed when they respond to each other—when life is shared as equals. Young students, whose sensitive minds react to their environment so keenly, need the proper setting for their full-fledged development. With freedom must come disciplined direction. This Mission is competent to provide this direction to the budding mind. Its work of social service will instil into the student proper realization of his duties as a citizen. He will have living contact with better people. Learning will not be divorced from humanity, for the bond of service will unite them as nothing else can. Gandhiji's conception of Basic Education also implies this union of knowledge and service.

With sincere and heartfelt prayers for a bright future I lay the foundation stone of the new building of the Students' Hostel.

While laying the foundation stone of the Charitable Dispensary, Hon'ble Mr Morarji R. Desai, Home Minister, Bombay, exhorted the audience to follow the teachings of the *guru* (Sri Ramakrishna), and said that it would lead to *shanti*, peace. The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna preached by Swami Vivekananda throughout the world had brought much credit to India. The dispensary was only one of the many useful services rendered by the Ashram. True love was the best healer for all ills, he said.

Mr. M. A. Master, ex-president of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries, who laid the foundation stone of the Lecture Hall, spoke highly of the humanitarian activities of the Mission.

Mr. D. M. Daru, Secretary of the Mission, read a brief report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay.

Mr. G. L. Mehta, President, Indian Tariff Board, proposed the vote of thanks, which was supported by Mr. P. G. Shah, Member, Public Service Commission.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, RAJKOT FREE HOMEOPATHIC DISPENSARY

The opening ceremony of the Free Homeopathic Dispensary at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot was performed by Hon'ble Sri Nanabhai Bhatt, Minister for

Health and Education in Saurashtra, on the 19th September, 1948 at 6-30 p.m. Darbar Shri Gopaldas Desai, Sri H. V. Divetia, Chief Justice, Col K. Rai, Chief Medical Officer and several other leading gentlemen of Rajkot and officers of the Saurashtra Government attended this function and showed great enthusiasm on this occasion.

Swami Bhuteshanandaji, President of the Ashrama, first of all spoke on the occasion and gave a short history of the Ashrama, its various humanitarian activities and the idealism with which it is carrying on its work. In brief, he said, in the words of Swami Vivekananda 'our ideals are *Renunciation and Service*—for the purification of one's own self as well as the good of all beings.'

The Ashrama is conducting an Ayurvedic Dispensary but as per suggestions from the local people one Homeopathic section is being added. Dr. G. C. Chanda, D.M.S., has been appointed as the doctor in charge of this section. He has acted as the R.M.O. in one of the biggest Homeopathic Hospitals of Calcutta. The Swamiji then announced the donations given for doing this work by several generous-minded people of Bombay and Rajkot. More trained hands and necessary funds forthcoming, he hoped to extend this system of treatment to villages in the interior where the people get very little medical help under the present circumstances. Side by side with Homeopathy, he said, he proposed to start a surgical dressing section for minor cases fitted up with the required accessories.

Dr Ratilal D. Parekh, Homeopathic Practitioner of Rajkot, and Dr N. M. Tank, another Homeopath, also spoke on the occasion giving an account of the origin and development of this system of medicine. Shri B.M. Buch and Shri M. H. Udani gave speeches fitting to the occasion.

Then Shri Nanabhai Bhatt gave a very interesting speech during the course of which he admired the work which was being done so sincerely by the *sadhus* of the Ramakrishna Order in service of humanity. He wished every success to the Homeopathic Dispensary declared open by him at the request of Swamiji.

Principal Dr Ramanlal K. Yajnik, a Vice-President of the Ashrama, then thanked the President, ladies and gentlemen who had participated in the function. After garlanding and distribution of *Prasad* the meeting came to a close.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

##### REPORT FOR 1948

The Home, which was started in a small way in 1905 with the idea of running it on a *Gurukula* system to provide facilities for an all-round training to its students, has grown to enormous proportions. The following is report of its activities during 1948 :

*Working of the Home :* The Home has three distinct sections : the Collegiate, the Technical, and the Secondary. So far as the first is concerned the Home provides only boarding and lodging to the students, while in the other two it provides instructional facilities as well. The Home is run free, the admission is restricted to the poor, and the selection is on the basis of merit. The total strength in 1948 was 255, and about 40% of the students were receiving scholarships or concessions in fees. The health of the students is examined by competent doctors ; they are given moral and religious training with catholicity of outlook ; opportunities are provided for the growth of self-reliance and organizing abilities. Training is given in music to those who have aptitude, dramas are enacted, various festivals observed, and talks given to cater to their cultural and spiritual needs.

A fine library with about 3000 books (excluding about 8000 books made over to the Vivekananda College and the Ramakrishna Math) is also attached to the Home.

High praises have been bestowed on the working of the institution by men like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri C. Rajagopalachari, and Prof. Radhakrishnan :

*University Education :* Out of the 38 students in the Collegiate section 31 were in the Arts Colleges, 2 in the Medical College, and 5 in the Engineering College. Out of 28 sent up for various examinations 27 were successful, with 13 first classes in the Intermediate, and one stood first in the Presidency in the B.O.L. (Hons.).

*Technical Education :* The Technical Institute, which is recognized by the Government, prepares students for L.A.E. (Licentiate in Automobile Engineering). The Institute is well-equipped with modern machines and tools, and imparts training in various aspects of the work in this line. It had a strength of 74 students. Out of the 13 students sent up for public examination 6 came out successful. Most of the students who have passed out from this institution have secured good appointments.

The Union of the students published a type-script magazine, and met often to discuss subjects connected with their line of studies.

The training which was being imparted to the war-disabled was discontinued. The ownership of the '*Civmil*' Hostel building was transferred to the Mission by the Government of India.

*Secondary Education :* The Residential High School (Athur Camp), which was shifted previously from Mylapore to accommodate the Vivekananda College, is intended to be shifted back to Mylapore. The strength of the school in 1948 was 143 boarders and 10 day scholars. All the 26 students sent up for S.S.I.C. examination were declared eligible. One student won the prize of late Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar by securing 509 marks out of 600. Basic craft and manual training

## PRABUDDHA BHARATA

in spinning, weaving, carpentry, mat-weaving, rattan-work, and gardening were given in addition to physical training and games. The Literary Union of the students brought out a fine manuscript magazine, and held debates. The Masters' Association also held fortnightly meetings to discuss matters of educational interest. The senior students conducted a Night School in the Harijan colony.

**Elementary Education:** The Centenary Elementary School at Mylapore was conducted well and grew in strength, which rose upto 304 (206 boys and 98 girls) as against 271 in 1947. It had twelve sections with 13 teachers including 1 lady teachers. It is run in thatched sheds, and efforts are being made to acquire a site measuring ten grounds to put up permanent constructions.

**The Higher Elementary School and Harijan Hostel:** The school which was started in June 1945 with classes 1 to 5 became a full-fledged one with a strength of 151 boys and 36 girls.

A Harijan Hostel was started in 1947 with the help of a grant from the Labour Department, and it maintained 29 boarders.

**The Boys' Schools:** In view of the large growth of activities, the management of these schools at Tyagarayanagar was entrusted to a separate committee during the year as decided by the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission.

**The Finance:** The total running expenditure of all sections amounted to Rs. 1,50,844-12-9 and the normal receipts to Rs. 1,48,482-12-7, leaving deficit of Rs. 2,362-0-2 as against 7,033-13-8 last year. Small additions were made to buildings and equipment.

The donations and subscriptions that are being received are not sufficient to meet the growing needs of the Home, especially in view of the rising prices. For this reason the management has been forced to draw upon the slender capital funds of the institution to meet the deficit. Such a great institution rendering useful public service silently for years deserves all encouragement. It relies on the generous public for its maintenance and development. The Management of the Home feel profoundly grateful to all those who have helped the institution in cash, kind, or service.

### SRI HARE KRISHNA MAHATAB AT THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA BHUBANESWAR

Sri Hare Krishna Mahatab, the Hon'ble Premier of Orissa, paid a visit to the Ashram on 31st January 1949 at 7 p.m. on the birthday of Swami Brahmananda, founder of the Ashram. He was welcomed by Swami Gobindananda, along with many ladies and gentlemen who had assembled. The School-building and the Math compound were decorated with national flags. In the pandal were placed well-decorated portraits of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Brahmananda. The meeting began with songs and the chanting of vedic peace-invocations. Then Swami Sharvanandaji welcomed the Premier and spoke on the origin and work of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

The Premier, in his speech, said that religious institutions, in his opinion, are like the lighthouses of the world. The liners in the ocean determine their courses with the help of these lighthouses. They will be in danger if they ignore them. Similarly the religious institutions point out to the blundering people the true path. Because of this people have held in regard these institutions from time immemorial. He pointed out that society is now full of corruption and that the model life of the virtuous will help to purify society. The *sadhus* and the *sants* did this in the past and will have to do it at present and in the future. This was his firm belief. Drawing attention to the inscription of Asoka on the Dhanli Hill near Bhubaneswar, he said that reconstruction of society is impossible unless equality and fraternity be introduced in every field. Non-violence and truth preached by Mahatma Gandhi are but repetition of the ideas of Swami Vivekananda, realized in his personal life, for the awakening of India in the field of politics and religion. The Premier disclosed that in his long life in the prison he got much light by the study of Swami's lectures. He concluded by saying that the institutions of the Ramakrishna Order all over India have been doing immense service to the poor and the afflicted of the country, and that they deserved to be encouraged in their activities by the support of the local governments. After thanks-giving and distribution of *prasad* the meeting came to a close at 9-30 p.m.

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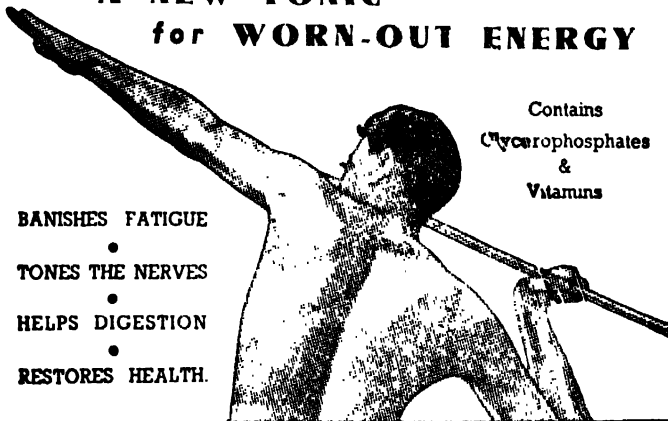


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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

MAY 1949



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

1719 Turk Street  
San Francisco, Cal.

My dear Joe—

Just a line before you start for France. Are you going *via* England? I had a beautiful letter from Mrs Sevier in which I find that Miss Muller sent simply a paper without any other words to one of boys Kaly, who was with her in Darjeeling.

Congreave is the name of her nephew and he is in the Transvaal war—that is the reason she underlined that, to show her nephew fighting the Boers in Transvaal. That was all. I cannot understand it any more now than then of course.

I am physically worse than at Los Angeles, mentally much better, stronger, and peaceful. Hope it will continue to be so.

I have not yet got a reply to my letter to you—I expect it soon.

One Indian letter of mine was directed by mistake to Mrs Wheeler—it came all right to me in the end. I had nice notes from Saradananda—they are doing beautifully over there. The boys are working up—well, scolding has both sides you see—it makes them up and doing.

We Indians have been so so dependent for long that it requires, I am sorry, a good lot of tongue to make them active. One of the laziest fellows had taken charge of the Anniversary this year and pulled it through. They have planned and are successfully working famine works by themselves without my help. They are fighting the municipal rascals bravely and I am sure we will bring them to book. All this comes from the terrific scolding I have been giving—sure !!!

They are standing on their own feet. I am so glad. See Joe—the Mother is working

I sent Miss Thursby's letter to Mrs Hearst. She sent me an invitation to her musical. I could not go. I had a bad cold. So that was all. Another lady for whom I had a letter



from Miss Thursby—an Oakland lady, did not reply. I don't know whether I will make enough in Frisco to pay my fare to Chicago!! Oakland work has been successful—I hope to get about \$100 from Oakland—that is all. After all I am content. It is better that I tried. There is nothing in ... for me. Even the magnetic healer had not anything for me. Well—things will go on anyhow for me—I do not care how. I am very peaceful. I learn from Los Angeles Mrs Leggett has been bad again. I wired to New York to learn what truth was in it. I will get a reply soon I expect.

Say, how will you arrange about my mail when the Leggetts are over on the other side? Will you so arrange that they reach me right?

I have nothing more to say—all love and gratitude is yours already you know that. You have already done more than I ever deserved. I don't know whether I go to Paris or not—but I must go to England sure in May. I must not go home without trying England a few weeks more.

With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

P.S. Mrs Hensborough and Mrs Appenul have taken a flat for a month at 1719 Turk Street—I am with them and will be a few weeks.

V.

88T W. 39th Street,  
New York.  
16th ? Dec. 1895.

Blessed and beloved—

All your letters reached by one mail today. Miss Muller also writes me one. She has read in the *Indian Mirror* that Swami Krishnananda is coming over to England. If that is so, he is the strongest man that I can get.

The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a question class. The general attendance varies between 70 to 120. Besides every Sunday I have a public lecture. The last month my lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come as a rule, 300 standing, and about 300 going off, not finding room. This week therefore I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of holding 1200 people.

There is no admission charged in these lectures, but a collection covers the rent. The newspapers have taken me up this week and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year. If I could have remained here this summer and organized a summer place, the work would be going on sure foundations here. But as I intend to come over in May to England, I will have to leave it unfinished. If, however, Krishnananda comes to England, and you find him strong and able, and if you find the work in London will not be hurt by my absence this summer, I would rather be here this summer.

Again I am afraid my health is breaking down under constant work. I want some rest. We are so unused to these Western methods, especially the time-keeping. I will leave you to decide all these. The *Brahmavadin* is going on here very satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on *bhakti*; also send them a monthly account of the work. Miss Muller wants to come to America. I do not know whether she will or not. Some friends here are publishing my Sunday lectures. I have sent you a few of the first one. I will send by next mail a few of the next two lectures and if you like them I will ask

them to send you a number. Can you manage to get a few hundred copies sold in England? That will encourage them in publishing the subsequent ones.

Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard University. Then I will have a rest, and then I come to England, unless you think that things go on without me and with Krishnananda.

Ever yours with love and blessings,  
Vivekananda

At Mayavati,  
Himalayas.  
15th Jan. 1901

My dear Sturdy,

I learn from Saradananda (that) you have sent over Rs. 1529-5-5 to the Math, being the money that was in hand for work in England. I am sure it will be rightly used.

Capt. Sevier passed away about 3 months ago. They have made a fine place here in the mountains and Mrs Sevier means to keep it up. I am on a visit to her and I may possibly come over to England with her.

I wrote you a letter from Paris. I am afraid you did not get it.

So sorry to learn the passing away of Mrs Sturdy. She has been a very good wife and good mother and it is not ordinarily one meets with such in this life.

This life is full of shocks, but the effects pass away, anyhow that is the hope.

It is not because of your free expression of opinion in your last letter to me that I stopped writing. I only let the wave pass, as is my wont. Letters would only have made a wave of a little bubble.

Kindly tender my regards and love to Mrs Johnson and other friends if you meet them.

And I am ever yours in the Truth.  
Vivekananda

Grand Hotel,  
Valai,  
Switzerland.

I am reading a little, starving a good deal, and practising a good deal more. The strolls in the woods are simply delicious. We are now situated under three huge glaciers, and the scenery is very beautiful.

By the bye, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-lake origin of the Aryans have been taken clean off my mind. The Swiss is a Tartar *minus* a pigtail.

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH 1931

Mahapurush Maharaj has grown so weak physically that it is difficult for him, without help, even to get down from his cot. So one or other among his attendants always stays near him, even during the night. He generally remains absorbed in a spiritual mood throughout the night. Sometimes he asks the person waiting on him to read to him certain specified portions from books like the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the *Gita*, the *Upanishad*, and the *Bhagavata*, and listens to these with rapt attention. At other moments he sits quiet in meditation or prays to the Master with folded hands for the good of the world. What a fervent outpouring of the heart ! Sometimes again he lies down holding pictures of gods and goddesses in his bosom. In answer to the attendants' frequent queries : 'Maharaj, are you not going to sleep even a little ?', he replies : 'What sleep can I have ?' and begins to sing forthwith :

My sleep has broken, can I sleep any more ?

I am awake in yoga.

Returning your sleep of Ignorance to you

O Mother, I have put sleep to sleep.

I am come to a new state now and have learnt  
a lesson from a good teacher,

O Mother, I have got One of a country

Where there is no night.

What is day or twilight to me ?

I have made twilight barren.

One day, on the topic of sleep, he said 'It is said in the *Chandi* that Mother Herself is of the nature of sleep : *Ya devi sarva-bhuteshu nidrarupena samsthita*. She is the support of everything, animate and inanimate. There is nothing besides Her. *Adharabhuta jagatastameka*. The Mother is the only support of the entire universe. The Mother is ever present in the chamber of my heart illumining it. All fatigue goes away at the very sight of Her, and even the need for sleep

is not felt at all. Whenever I have a tired feeling I look at Her. All is bliss at once, and the tired feeling goes.' .....

It was nearly three in the night, and all was quiet around. A dim electric light was faintly lighting up Mahapurushji's room. Addressing the attendant near he said, 'Look, do *japa* as much as you can in the dead of night. That is a very opportune time for *japa* and meditation. You may feel sleepy when you sit for meditation. But do not give it up still. You will discover afterwards that though you may go off into a light sleep in course of doing *japa*, the *japa* will continue all the same inwardly during that time. Sit in such a way that the body is held erect. If at any time you feel too much sleepy, get up from the seat and do *japa* standing or walking. "Work with your hand and say the name of the Lord Hari with your lips." That is to say be always doing *japa*, whether you move about or do some work. Go on doing *japa* in this way for some time and you will find that a part of the mind will always remain engaged in *japa*. *Japa* will flow like a hidden under current in all states. If you be up and doing and have fortitude enough to do *japa* continuously, day and night, for two or three years, you will find that everything has come within your power. You may remember that the *Chandi* makes mention of *maharatri*, the great night. The *maharatri* is the best time for spiritual practices. A spiritual current flows at the time. The finer the mind becomes, the more it will feel the effect of that current. Why should the *sadhu* sleep much in the night ? It is enough to sleep for an hour or two. If you sleep through the entire night, when are you going to do your spiritual practices ? All nature becomes quiet in the dead of night, when mind becomes steady after a little effort, and high thoughts and

feelings come easily to the heart.'

The attendant said in great awe : 'My mind is not absorbed by *japa* and meditation. Whenever I sit for *japa*, I find all kinds of idle thoughts coming into the mind and throwing it into a tumult. Rather I find that I am able to have some remembrance of God while engaged in your service or some other work ; it makes the mind calm and gives some joy too. But whenever I sit for *japa* or meditation the mind seems to revolt altogether. After fighting with the mind in this way and experiencing much disquiet, I have in the end to get up from the seat. It is a new phase, which I did not have before. For some time past, particularly since I began to serve you, this phase has come over my mind.'

Listening to these words of the attendant about the disquiet state of his mind, Mahapurushji kept silent for long. Afterwards he said in a quiet tone : 'Yes, some minds have that attitude of revolt. There is a way to bring even such minds under control. It is possible gradually to make even such rebellious minds quiet and point it to the object of meditation. Do not start doing *japa* or meditation immediately after you take the seat. First sit steadily and pray to the Master yearningly. The Master is a living embodiment of *samadhi*. If you meditate on Him after praying sincerely to Him, the mind will immediately become absorbed. Say to Him, "O Lord, do make my mind steady, do make it calm." After praying in this way for some time, think of the *samadhi* of the Master. The picture of the Master that you see is the picture of a very high state of *samadhi*. Ordinary men can have no idea of what the picture really means. Afterwards sit quietly and go on watching the mind and see where it runs away. You are not the mind. The mind is yours ; you are different from the mind ; your nature is the Self. Sit like a witness and go on watching the movements of the mind. After running about for some time

the mind will get tired of itself. Then seize it, bring it back from its wanderings and set it to the meditation of the Master. Seize the mind and bring it back as many times as it will run away. You will find that as you go on doing this the mind has gradually quieted down. Then repeat the name of the Lord and meditate on Him with great love. Do exactly as I tell you for a few days, you will see that the mind has come under your control. But you must go on doing this regularly every day with great faith.

The Attendant : When I look at the state of my mind I don't think I shall be able to do spiritual practices at all. The only hope lies in your blessings.

Mahapurush Maharaj (affectionately) : My child, there is no want of blessings. You have made the Master the sole support of your life after having renounced everything. If you don't have our blessings, who will ? But you have also to toil hard. As the Master used to say : "The breeze of divine grace is ever blowing. Put up your sail." Personal effort means exactly this, namely, the unfurling of the sail. Dogged perseverance and self-reliant effort are necessary for good work and spiritual practices, in particular. One must manifest the strength of a lion for the realization of Self-knowledge. Nothing at all can be achieved without energy and self-reliant effort. When you unfurl the sail, the breeze of grace is sure to blow into it. As long as man retains the notion of the ego, so long he must continue to persevere. Why have you become *sadhus*, leaving your parents, hearth and home ? Because, you wanted to realize God. And as a result of merit acquired by the practice of goodness in previous lives you have, through the grace of God, come under the shelter of the Master, and have found a place in His holy Order. Especially, the Master has given you the opportunity for staying near us at all times. If the aim of life is missed in spite of all these opportunities you have got,

can there be a greater cause for regret? Have great strength of mind. You have launched your bark in this ocean of relative existence by taking His name which purifies the fallen. Can you afford to shrivel up in fear at the sight of a few big billows and relinquish the helm? These are the terrors of *Mahamaya*, the Great Enchantress. She tests the aspirants by these. When the aspirants' mind is not swerved by these, but remains steady and firm in its resolve, like the Sumeru mountain, *Mahamaya* becomes pleased and opens the door of Liberation. All is achieved when She is pleased. The *Chandi* says: *Saisha prasanna varada nrinam bhavati muktaye*. This *Mahamaya* Herself, when pleased, grants the boon of Liberation to man. Have you not read the life of the Buddha? *Mahamaya*, in the form of *Mara*, attempted to strike terror even into Buddha's heart by means of frightful forms, but seated on his *asana* he resolved with the utmost firmness:

"Let the body dry up in this seat, and let skin and bone and flesh be annihilated,

Without attaining Knowledge, which is difficult to have even in many cycles of creation, my body will not move from this seat."

What a resolution! In the end the Mother was pleased and opened the door of *nirvana*, and Buddha became blessed by attaining *bodhi*. The same thing also happened in the life of the Master. So I say to you, my child, toil hard and take to your spiritual practice with great determination. How can you afford to give up *japa* and meditation, because the mind refuses to be absorbed by them? Look at our life also. The life of everyone of the children of the Master is a living and ideal example of hard and austere *sadhana*. What severe *tapasya* haven't they done?—Maharaj, (Swami Brahmananda) Hari Maharaj, (Swami Turiyananda), and Yogen Maharaj (Swami Yogananda) and others. Yet they had

received the boundless grace of the Master who was the Incarnation of the Age. He could give the Knowledge of Brahman to all by mere wish. He used to send people into *samadhi* by mere touch; still he made us go through many extreme and severe forms of *sadhana*. The path of *sadhana* also becomes easy through the grace of God, all obstructions and difficulties vanish. God looks into the heart, He notices sincerity. He reveals Himself when one calls on Him crying with great yearning. This itself is His grace that He mercifully reveals Himself before the devotee. He is Free and Perfect. Can spiritual disciplines create an obligation for Him so that He will come down and reveal Himself after so much *japa* or meditation or austerity has been done? It is never so. But then *sadhana* means *developing* the longing for Him and Him alone. It is the longing for God and the giving up of the world and everything, forgetting name and fame, physical pleasure, and even one's own existence and all about this world and the next. God will mercifully reveal Himself to one who longs for Him in this way. An individual is able to see Him only because He reveals Himself through His infinite mercy. This is His grace. How can it be ever possible for an individual to see Him if He is not gracious to reveal Himself? He is as devoted to His worshippers as He is an ocean of mercy.

The Attendant: The only hope is that we have received your shelter. You will do whatever does us good. When once you have given us shelter, you will never forsake us.

Mahapurushji: The Master is very devoted to those who have taken shelter in Him; He is the protector of all who have taken refuge in Him. Once he has taken hold of a person's hand, the person has no more fear of getting drowned in the ocean of this world. The *Chandi* says: *Tvamashritanam na vipannaranam, Tvamashrita hyashrayatam prayanti*. That is to say,

there is no danger for persons who have been give refuge by You. Those who are sheltered by You become a shelter unto others. Hold fast to the Master in every way, in thought, word, and action. He will liberate you from the bondage of the world. Those who have taken refuge at the Master's feet, giving up all other stays, and those whom we have given shelter, have no worry about Liberation. They will have it. That responsibility is on us, and we shall see to that. In the end the Master will surely lead all by the hand. But spiritual practices are meant not only for the attainment of Liberation. Live like a *Jivanmukta* (one who is Liberated while living even in this world) by realizing God even in this life on earth through spiritual practices. Call on Him as much as you can, take His name to your heart's fill, be merged in His thought, you will

enjoy the bliss of *jivanmukti* (Liberation in life). Apart from this, there is a special purpose of the Order which Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has built up. On each one of those who have found a place in this Order of the Master Swamiji has put a tremendous responsibility. Each *sannyasi* and *brahmachari* must build up such an ideal life of renunciation and *tapasya* that the life of each may become a fit instrument for the propagation of the pure *sattvika* idea of the Master, that the world at large may understand the Master, by looking not only at His pure Order but at each and every limb of it. Swamiji has laid down : For the Liberation of one's self and for the good of the world. Real good will come to the world when the broad and universal idea of the Master will spread over it. And he has put the responsibility of this work on the entire Order.

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (IV)

BY THE EDITOR

The picture of Aryan civilisation which ancient Indian literature, vedic and post-vedic, presents to us across tens of centuries is the picture of a moving and enlarging society, constantly growing rich in colour and details as it gradually spreads itself over the vast sub-continent of India. It is a spiritual story more than it is political. Political methods are, of course, employed for expansion and for securing social cohesion by a reign of law. But politics is of secondary importance and is employed as the instrument of a spiritual principle which is broad enough, and which alone is capable, to circumvent the conflicts inherent in a social situation showing wide disparities. More often politics merely gathers the rich harvest of a spiritual sowing which has laid the basis of a psychological

unity among the people. A spiritual unity becomes now and then translated into its equivalent political form. Political supremacy changes hands in later times and passes to new peoples who originally stood outside the vedic tradition but later became its upholders. Consider for example the Satavahanas of the Andhra country who lead, from towards the close of the 1st century B.C., a fresh spiritual and political revival from the South when the North lay in ruins under the blows of foreigners like the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas. Again these Yavanas, Sakas, and Pahlavas themselves enter Aryan society later on as fallen Kshatriyas (*vide Manusamhita*), and stand guard over Indian culture.

The spiritual character of the Indian expansion is reflected very clearly in the Epics.

India has always paid more attention to the spiritual side of life than to its political or economic aspects. But in society this spiritual emphasis has sometimes been carried to a point where it has meant the upsetting of a just balance between all its factors. We shall refer to concrete instances of this later on, but it is not difficult for the reader to anticipate them.

The Epics, however, give us the picture of a balanced polity, often very ideal it may be, where, though spirituality rules, real politics is never at a discount. Their emphasis on a spiritual conception of existence distinguishes these Epics clearly from similar literature that arose elsewhere. They are not mere hero-lauds that is to say, tales in praise of war-lords and military adventurers. The *Mahabharata* says of itself that it is not only a *dharmashastra* (a book of conduct for the achievement, in accordance with moral principles, of *artha*, power, and *kama*, pleasure) but also a *mokshashastra* (a gospel of Liberation). It, of course, also calls itself a *jaya* (a tale of victory), but the tale is one of religious conquest. The *Ramayana* is not only a *kavya* (poem) but also an *itihasa purana*, whose aim is to teach the fourfold aim of existence (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*) by means of apt stories and illustrations. The *Ramayana* primarily sets itself to the task of portraying ideal spiritual characters and an ideal civilization, *ramarajya*. In none of the Epics war and strife occupy the centre of the picture. Can we say the same thing about similar compositions elsewhere?

Rama is no political celebrity seeking military glory by exterminating peoples and laying countries in ruins. He goes everywhere as a friend of the righteous and as a foe of the ungodly, the self-sufficient man. Rama's character symbolizes power subordinated to spirituality. He humbles the pride of Parashurama but makes friends with the Nishada chieftain and the Shabari woman whose acceptance of the spiritual idea makes

them part of a common culture. He destroys Ravana but puts in his place his brother Vibhishana. It is not always easy to sift fact from fiction, but can an open mind which does not approach history with preconceived notions dismiss this vast literature as pure fabrication? Is not the broad underlying fact sufficiently clear? It is a natural habit with us to explain things we do not know in terms of those we do. It is inevitable; but it is also true that when facts demand of our intelligence that we rise above our habitual conceptions we fail very often to do so. Virochana regarded the Self he was taught as the body; it was a natural idea. But to Indra it became evident that such a notion could not be reconciled with the teachings he had received. (It is interesting to speculate if the story does not reflect actual history, at remote vedic times, when masses of 'natural' men failed to grasp the pure spiritual idea and made a travesty of it.) Rama has for this reason been regarded as a political conqueror by 'enlightened' scholarship. At the back of all such erudition are certain assumptions which the present age has converted into dogmas not open to question. There can be nothing beyond touch and sight, and no aim that is not political or economic. All else is unreal and bunkum. This philosophy explains the marked and constant tendency, that has been a characteristic of modern thought since Renaissance, to interpret a developed civilization, in its true spiritual sense, in terms of human societies, early and late, which have not awakened or find difficult to awaken still to the root conceptions of civilization and culture. Modern civilization, it seems, is irrevocably committed to the Aristotelian proposition that man is a political animal. There is no evidence anywhere today of a superior conception ruling society. In a modern society all that floats to the top is usually the scum and not its cream. ....

The great diversity of social conditions and

peoples, the references to the Vratyas, Vrishalas, Andhras, Pulindas, Nishadas, Nagas and so on and to new popular cults and beliefs that we find in later vedic and post-vedic literature, and all of which are included in a common society, tell unmistakably a long and exciting story of cultural integration. Unity is established on the basis of a fresh orientation of new beliefs and cults and ways of life.

All this, however, is an inside story. A foreign question in the real sense of the term faced India in an acute form, in recorded history, when the Achaemenian power and, shortly after, the Greeks, extended their operations across the Hindukush to the plains of the Indus and even beyond. These impacts proved momentous for humanity, but not in a political sense. The impacts from abroad, like those within, led to cultural developments which were far-reaching in their consequences. At first the familiar and easy responses arise. We find, on the one hand, some evidence of mimesis of the dominant political power, for example, of the Greek, in particular, in material externals like iconography, coinage, political and administrative terminology and arrangements, but usually the response takes the form of a narrow reactionism in face of the political and cultural danger. Society becomes rigid, status of women changes for the worse, and the orthodox party tries to establish an exclusive, totalitarian cult of vedic ritualism and elaborates rules of ceremonial purity. Slavery and serfdom clearly appear. All these consequences are largely due to fear and necessity. It is futile to attribute them entirely to selfishness. But man is always looking for a devil on which he can foist all blame and fix his hate.

The broad liberal spirit which had however gone deep into the roots of the society was far from dead. It had already come to form a Tradition of pure spirituality. It is reflected in the imperishable upanishadic story of Satyakama Jabala, whose mother, a maid-

servant at the houses of the wealthy, failed to answer her son's question about his parent-hood. But this damaging truth about himself which Satyakama related to his teacher, far from proving a bar to his discipleship, lifted him to the level of a true brahmin in the eyes of the teacher and qualified him for the highest Knowledge. In the Epics, the philosophers declare that in early days there was no distinction of caste (*brahman idam jagat*), and that caste arose later as a result of *karma*. The remark is significant as referring to an early homogeneous and simple society which became diversified and complex as time went on. Inter-marriage and commensality still prevailed in epic times. Both the Epics and the early Buddhist literature say that character and not birth or ceremonial purity is the true test of caste.

It was not long before the liberal tradition mounted a vigorous spiritual counter-offensive, to which both the extreme right and the extreme left gave way. New developments in religion and ethics take place. Different religions of love like the Bhagavata, the Shiva-Bhagavata or the Pashupata, and the worship of Shakti, rise in all their power and glory. All are opposed to the totalitarian vedic ritualism. All of them incorporate into the society new cults and *acharas* alongside the vedic ritual on a broad metaphysical basis (*api ched suduracharah bhajate mam ananyabhak .... —Suduracharah* is usually explained in another way. But the above interpretation is by no means unreasonable in view of its concordance with the broad spirit of the *Gita* and its pointed reference to *shudras* and other modes of worship which were clearly non-Aryan in the beginning). The *Bhagavata* says that according to the *satvata tantra*, i.e. the Bhagavata religion, women, *shudras*, and *dasas* can all become *vaishnavas*. The *Shaivagamas* clearly trace their origin from two sources, vedic and non-vedic.

Jainism and Buddhism, like many other



sects which failed to rise to equal importance, are born of such impacts. They do exactly the same thing, namely, incorporate into the Aryan fold new masses of men ; but they do this by a negation of vedic authority and formalism altogether. In origin Buddhism was a purely spiritual religion, a variant of *nivrittiddharma*. But later it developed new forms, particularly under the influence of the Bhagavata religion with its special emphasis on *bhakti* and *nishkama karma* based on the metaphysic of *jnana*, and also due to other racial and cultural factors it encountered on the way of its expansion. The Mahayana school bears the clear and deep impress of the Bhagavata religion. Apart from literary parallelisms and doctrinal similarities, the Buddhist historian, Lama Taranath of Nepal, pointedly refers to the guru of Nagarjuna, a brahmin-convert to Buddhism and the reputed founder of the Mahayana school, as having been influenced in his views by Sri Krishna, the central figure of the Bhagavata *dharma*. But this is a side issue, and need not occupy us much when Buddhism itself, as will be presently indicated, is a child of Hinduism.

Buddhism developed into the northern school, the Mahayana, the Broader Way, in response to the need of the people it faced for a more concrete and devotional faith related to activity. The Hinayana, the Narrower Way or the Strait Path in biblical language, could continue its more abstract and philosophical career in an area that had already been prepared for its reception by earlier Aryan penetration. The North is almost always for relaxation of rules, while the South enjoying comparative security could generally afford to be rigid in its orthodoxy. The more austere school of Jainism also found a stronghold in the South in Mysore. Similar is the case with other forms of vedic religion in later times. There are, needless to say, other factors which contributed to these changes and we do not mean to simplify matters beyond the point of reasonableness. But these ex-

planations undoubtedly suggest themselves to a mind seeking reasons for the developments that took place.

It is difficult, in the absence of suitable data, to make any precise guess as to the new masses of men which were brought within the fold of Indian society by the activity of these faiths and philosophies. But undoubtedly their number was very large. Buddhism is often treated as a thing that suddenly dropped from the sky on India, and gave an entirely novel turn to her history and culture. A so-called Buddhist period has been constructed in imagination and pictured as a vast, detached section of brilliant civilization, having no organic relation with Hinduism, that came somehow to be fitted into the frame of Indian history for a period of nearly six centuries, but which later on vanished altogether. It is a habit of the mind, born of practical necessity, to make things absolutely distinct in thought before it can deal with them successfully. But we cannot carry over this very practical rule of thumb into the field of reality or understanding without detriment to truth.

Whatever may be the reason for looking at Buddhism in this way (for it is not just a failure of intelligence, but more). Buddhism cannot be understood apart from its context. If you carefully look to its basic enunciations, the original part will appear to be no more than negative. It is, as Swami Vivekananda said, a 'rebel child of Hinduism.' Take for instance its root conceptions of world as suffering, *karma*, *samsara*, *bodhi*, even its fourfold Aryan truths (this last item is a clear echo of the yogic formula stated by Vyasa, the commentator of the *Yogasutras*, in the following way : *Yatha chikitsashastram chaturvyuham, rogah, rogahetuh, arogyam bhaishajyam iti, evamidamapi shastram chaturvyuham eva, tad yatha samsara, samsarahetuh, moksha, mokshopaya iti* : As the science of medicine is fourfold, namely,

disease, origin of disease, cure, and medicine, similarly this science of Salvation also is fourfold, namely, transmigratory existence, its origin, Liberation, and its Way. We are aware that Vyasa's commentary as we find it today is post-Buddhistic, but the doctrine he explains was fully developed long before Buddhism), its morality, and its *nivrittimarga*, you will find all these contained in the Indian literature of pre-Buddhistic times. What is peculiar is the repudiation of vedic authority and the promulgation of the doctrine of non-self. On the social plane there is also the very remarkable denial of caste.

We do not say all these in a narrow spirit. Buddha is venerated as a great Teacher outside India, but we worship him as God Incarnate. In India a person is judged great not because he says novel things or starts a fashion or makes gadgets that give comfort, but because he represents in his character immutable ancient truths. But a great man does great things also and initiates new changes, because he has a conception of that which never changes but which requires to be stated and approached in new ways from time to time. He is one who deals with the fundamentals of life. If we pay a little thought to the question of greatness, we shall discover that it rests primarily on the representative character of a person. A man is great in the measure he reflects and solves the deep and profound needs of man, that is to say, in the measure he is universal and not individual. Our political and economic structures change with the times due to the emergence of new social factors. What we build in these fields today do not last till tomorrow. Further, they are secondary. It is for this reason that statesmen and politicians are most quickly forgotten by the people. But consider the beautiful sculptures of the Maurya and the Gupta India, the deathless figures of Ajanta: these creations are truly immortal because they answer to some fundamental universal need of man. Greater still are the

persons, saints and prophets of all religions, who have shown by their lives that the eternal search of man for everlasting truth, immortality, and bliss cannot and will not fail. They are the images of perfection for which we all crave. Without them all our hopes will die, we will be inwardly crushed and lose all capacity for civilization and progress. But all this, however, goes against the modern cult of individualism and novelty.

It is the heart of Buddha which makes the greatest appeal and which conquered for Buddhism nearly a fourth of the human population. It is never the abstruse metaphysical side of the faith which has made converts in large numbers. All these apart, what he did was necessary in the context of the time and place in which he arose.

We have already said that Buddhism, Jainism, and a few similar religions arose on the fringe of the Holy Land of orthodox Brahmanism, the Aryavarta. This fact is as significant as the fact of their birth in Kshatriya communities, some of which later puranic writers condemned as unorthodox. While reactionism ruled in Aryavarta, at its fringes stood peoples and races in some sort of cultural and political opposition to the community that began to give itself superior airs in such a supercilious fashion. Repudiation of the *Veda* and of subtle metaphysical doctrines along with the social exclusiveness of the caste became a necessity if Buddha's message of true spirituality were to reach and help those peoples and bring them under a common idea. He based spirituality on the undeniable fact of human limitations and suffering and indicated the practical way out of it. It was a pure spiritual religion, practical and without pre-suppositions which aroused distrust and hostility. It was a path all could readily accept, because it touched the deep chords of life and appealed to universal factors above petty formulations of dogma. It talked in the language of the peo-

ple. Moreover there was the wonderful expression of that kind heart which took a social form in the repudiation of caste. Without all these Indian society could make no fresh advance.

Buddhism marks a milestone in the march of humanity to a universal civilization imaging the divine sameness (*samatta*) of man. Buddha was a Hindu who adapted the old tradition to the needs of a new situation. It was greatly due to him that a wider social cohesion reflected in the birth of new political organizations could take place. Has Buddhism departed from India? It is like asking if India has gone out of India? What has passed away are simply the factors that had only local and temporary validity.

Caste came back to those areas from where it had departed under Buddhism. The reason is that in the complex situation of the time with its wide disparities, racial and cultural, in every field it provided the only feasible means for mitigating the conflict and competition inherent in it. Some kind of social hierarchy and division was essential for maintaining the integrity of Indian social polity. When we remember the horrible practices to which Buddhism degenerated later on, because the new peoples who entered Aryan

society carried over into the new fold all their ancient cults and superstitions and failed to be civilized overnight, we may find just reason for the re-appearance of some form of social safeguard for preventing the entire community from being drawn into a religious and cultural sewer, which could only mean complete disintegration. Caste then maintained culture and unity. Today, in altered circumstances, its skeletal remains stand in the way of enlightened social rearrangement. It has become a social enormity when we have opportunities to add a new breadth to our society. But it was not so in the past when science and technique were not there rapidly to translate our ideal of sameness (*samatta*), into concrete realities. We are apt to judge the past in the light of the present. No institution can arise or last long without good reason. It is easy to berate a thing after it has served its purpose, but very often we fail to see it in its true context. If all of us, orthodox and non-orthodox, friends and opponents, can today be clear about the basic principles of our social structure, we shall perhaps be able to agree on a common method that will add a new dimension to our society without taking anything away from its ancient depth.

(To be continued)

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE UPANISHADS (I)

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

### THE VEDAS

THE VEDAS are the basic scripture of the Hindus and their highest authority in all matters pertaining to religion and philosophy. They are, moreover, the earliest extant Indo-Aryan literary monuments. The Hindus regard them as eternal, without beginning, without human authorship. The primary meaning of the nan *Veda* is Knowledge, super-sensuous wisdom. The secondary re-

ference is to the words in which that knowledge is embodied. And so the term *Veda* denotes not only the orthodox religious and philosophical wisdom of India, but also the books in which the earliest utterances of that wisdom are preserved. The Hindus look upon these books with the highest reverence. They are known as the Word-Brahman, the *Shabda-Brahma*.

Knowledge is of two kinds. The first is

derived from the sense-organs and corroborated by various evidences based upon the experiences of the sense-organs. This is the form of knowledge that falls within the scope of the physical sciences. The second, however, is transcendent and is realized through the mental and spiritual discipline of yoga. This is the subject matter of the *Vedas*. According to Patanjali, the traditional master of the yoga doctrine, it is not the words of the *Vedas* that are eternal, but the knowledge or ideas conveyed through them. This knowledge, also called the *sphota*, has existed always. At the conclusion of a cycle both the *sphota* and the created universe merge in the undifferentiated causal state, and at the beginning of the new cycle the two together again become manifest. The Lord brings forth the universe with the help of the knowledge of the *Vedas*. He Himself utters the words that express this Knowledge and confers upon them their appropriate meanings. That is to say, it is the Lord, the Creator of the universe, who has determined the precise meaning that is to be attached to every vedic word. He is the first teacher of vedic truth. Though the words may be different in different cycles, the ideas conveyed through them remain unalterable: no human intellect can interfere with them. According to Vedanta, the words of the *Vedas* come from the Lord spontaneously, like a man's breathing.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* commences with the statement that, in the beginning of the cycle, the Lord taught the *Vedas* through Brahma, the first created being. According to the *Puranas*, Brahma had been absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Lord, when, through the Lord's grace, there arose in his heart an indistinct sound. This was followed by the sound Om, the Sound-Brahman, which is the essence of the vedic wisdom. This sacred syllable transformed itself into the various vowels and consonants of the alphabet. With their assistance Brahma

uttered words, and these are what became known to the world as the *Vedas*. He taught the *Vedas* to his disciples Marichi, Atri, Angira, and others, and thus mankind came to possess the vedic revelation.

The *Vedas* are called *shruti* (from *shru*, to hear), since they were handed down orally from teacher to disciple. The Hindus did not at first commit them to writing. Either writing was unknown to them at that early period of history or they considered the words of the *Vedas* too sacred to set down. Written words become the common property of all, whereas the *Vedas* were to be studied only by those who had been initiated by a qualified teacher. Such was the high esteem in which the Hindus held the words that they did not make the slightest change even in the pronunciation while passing them on from generation to generation. Hence, though committed to writing only many centuries after their composition, the *Vedas* as we now possess them contain the exact words and ideas that were known to the most ancient Hindus.

### THE DIVISION OF THE VEDAS

The *Vedas* have been divided in various ways. The two most general divisions according to subject-matter are known as the *karmakanda* and *jnana-kanda*. The first deals with *karma*, ritualistic action, sacrifices, etc. the purpose of which is the attainment of material prosperity here on earth and felicity in heaven after death. The second is concerned with the knowledge through which one is liberated from ignorance and enabled to realize the Highest Good.

In the *Puranas* it is stated that Vyasa was commanded by Brahma to make a compilation of the *Vedas*. Vyasa is reputed to be the author of the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Bhagavad Gita* forms a part.<sup>1</sup> He lived at

<sup>1</sup> The authorship of several Hindu scriptures is ascribed to Vyasa. Either there were more than one

the time of the battle of Kurukshetra. With the help of four disciples, so the tradition goes, this great saint and poet arranged the *Vedas* in four books, namely, the *Rik*, *Yajur*, *Saman*, and *Atharva*. He was thus the classifier of the *Vedas*, though not their author. For many centuries before his time the *Vedas* had been known and their injunctions had formed the basis of all Hindu philosophical thought and all brahminical ceremonial. But the texts had not existed in a systematic form. They had been revealed by the Lord to certain holy men of the remote past who had purified their minds by the practice of such spiritual disciplines as self-control and concentration—the great teachers known as the *rishis*, or seers of truth. The *Vedas* name both men and women among the *rishis*.

Vyasa compiled the *Rig-Veda* by collecting the *riks*. Of the *samans* he composed the *Sama-Veda*, while the *Yajur-Veda* he composed of *yajus*. The *Rig-Veda*, which may be called a book of chants, is set to certain fixed melodies. The *Sama-Veda* has no independent value; for it consists mostly of stanzas from the *Rig-Veda*. The arrangement of its verses is solely with reference to their place and use in the Soma sacrifice. The *Yajur-Veda* contains, in addition to verses taken from the *Rig-Veda*, many original prose formulas which may be called sacrificial prayers.<sup>2</sup> The *Atharva-Veda* consists of a special class of vedic texts known as *chhandas*. These deal with spells, incantations, and kingly duties, as well as exalted spiritual truths. Western scholars sometimes exclude this compilation from their consideration of the *Vedas*; but according to the Hindu view

it definitely belongs among them. The name *Trayi*, or *Triad*, often used to denote the *Vedas*, is collectively applied to the *Rig-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, and the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda* being excluded from the *Triad* because it has no application to sacrificial actions. Nevertheless, one of the four priests officiating in all vedic sacrifices had to be thoroughly versed in the *chhandas*.

Each of the four *Vedas* falls into two sections: *Mantra* and *Brahmana*. The *Mantra* is also called the *Samhita* (from *sam*, together, and *hita*, put), which means, literally, a collection of hymns, or *mantras*, used in the sacrifices. The offering of oblations for the propitiation of the *devatas*, or deities, is termed the sacrifice, or *yajna*. This was a highly important ceremony through which the ancient Indo-Aryans communed with the gods, or higher powers. The *Mantra* comprises the prayers and hymns, while the *Brahmana* contains the rules and regulations for the sacrifices, deals with their accessories, and also reveals the meaning of the *Mantra*, which otherwise would remain obscure. Therefore both the *Mantra* and the *Brahmana* were indispensable for the orthodox worship and propitiation of the gods.

A further development of the *Brahmana*, and included therein, was the *Aranyaka*, the so-called 'forest treatise.' This was intended for those people who had retired into the forest in accordance with the ideal of the third stage of life, and were consequently unable to perform in the usual way the sacrifices obligatory for all twice-born householders.<sup>3</sup> The sacrifices required many articles and accessories impossible to procure

Vyasa or other Indian writers, following a well-known custom by means of which importance was often attached to books in ancient times, published or circulated their own works under the name of this great philosopher.

<sup>2</sup> See S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. p. 12. Cambridge, London 1932.

<sup>3</sup> The members of the three upper castes in Hindu society—the brahmins, the *kshattriyas*, and the *vaishyas*—were called *dvija*, twice-born. Their first birth refers to their coming out of their mother's womb; the second, which is a spiritual birth, to their initiation by a religious teacher, who invests them with the sacred thread, thus entitling them to study the *Vedas* and participate in the Vedic rituals.

in the forest. Hence the *Aranyaka* prescribes symbolic worship, describes various meditations that were to be used as substitutes for an actual sacrifice. To give an illustration from the first chapter of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: instead of actually performing the vedic Horse-sacrifice (*Asvamedha*), the forest-dweller was to meditate in a special way upon the dawn as the head of the horse, the sun as the eye, the air as the life, and so on. The worship was lifted from the physical to the mental level.

### THE FOUR STAGES

The full life-period of an Indo-Aryan was divided into four stages, namely, *brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *vanaprastha*, and *sannyasa*. The first stage was devoted to study. The celibate student led a life of chastity and austerity and served his teacher with humility. He learnt the *Mantra* and the *Brahmana* sections of the *Vedas*. And when he left the teacher's house, after completing his studies, he was commanded not to deviate from truth and not to forget to persevere in the study of the *Vedas*. The second stage was devoted to household duties. The young man took a wife. Both together performed the vedic sacrifice with the hymns of the *Mantra* and in accordance with the rules laid down in the *Brahmana*. The third stage commenced when the hair turned grey and the face began to wrinkle. The householder consigned the responsibility of the home to his children and retired with his wife into the forest. He was then known as a *vanaprastha* or *aranyaka*, a forest-dweller. The *Aranyaka* portion of the *Vedas* prescribed for him sacrifice by meditation and symbolic worship.

The final stage, called *sannyasa*, was the culmination of the strictly regulated life of an Indo-Aryan.<sup>4</sup> During this period having

totally renounced the world, he became a *sannyasin*, or wandering monk, free from worldly desires and attachments and absorbed in the uninterrupted contemplation of Brahman. It was no longer necessary to worship God by means of material articles or even mental symbols. One experienced directly the non-duality of God, the soul, and the universe—Spirit communing immediately with the Spirit. The *sannyasin* took the vow of dedicating his life to Truth and to the service of humanity, and was honoured as a spiritual leader of society. And it was for him that the *Upanishads* (which are mostly the concluding portions of the *Aranyakas*) were intended. The *Upanishads* are concerned with the direct experience of Brahman, which liberates one from the bondage of the relative world.

Thus the Indo-Aryan seers arranged the *Vedas* to conform to the four stages of life. The *brahmachari* studied the *Samhita*, the householder followed the injunctions of the *Brahmana*, the forest-dweller practised contemplation according to the *Aranyaka*, and the *sannyasin* was guided by the exalted wisdom of the *Upanishads*. According to the Hindu view, all four portions of the four *Vedas* were revealed simultaneously and have existed from the very beginning of the cycle. They are not to be regarded as exhibiting a philosophical development or evolution in the processes of thought.<sup>5</sup>

Thus one can become a *sannyasin* from any stage. The normal course, however, is to proceed through the series of the four stages.

<sup>5</sup> Some Western scholars divide the vedic age into four distinct periods. These are named the *Chhandas* period, the *Mantra* period, the *Brahmana* period, and the *Sutra* period. According to this view, the *mantras*, or hymns, were composed during the *Chhandas* period and compiled during the *Mantra* period. During the first part of the *Brahmana* period were composed the *Brahmanas*, and during the second part, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*. During the *Sutra* period were written the well-known *sutras*, namely, the *Kalpa*, *Grhya*, *Srauta*, and others. Then a decline

<sup>4</sup> According to a vedic injunction, one ..... renounce the world whenever one feels distaste for it.

It has already been stated that Vyasa systematized the *Vedas* in four books. He taught the *Rig-Veda* to his disciple Paila, the *Yajur-Veda* to Vaishampayana, the *Sama-Veda* to Jaimini, and the *Atharva-Veda* to Śumanta. Among the disciples of Vaishampayana was the celebrated Yajnavalkya, one of the great teachers of the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*. A legend states that this disciple became so vain of his knowledge that he incurred the displeasure of his guru and was expelled from the hermitage, with the command that he should leave what he knew of the *Veda* behind. The proud disciple spat out everything that he had learnt and went away. But some other disciples of the sage Vaishampayana were grieved at the sad plight of the vedic lore and so, assuming the forms of partridges (*tittira*), they swallowed it, and later on taught that vedic knowledge to their own disciples. Since then that portion of the *Vedas* has been known as the *Black Yajur-Veda* (*Krishna Yajur-Veda*) and also as the *Taittiriya Samhita* (from *tittira*). Yajnavalkya, however, worshipped the sun god, who was so pleased with his devotion

that he appeared before him in an equine form. The god committed to him the vedic knowledge that later on became known as the *White Yajur-Veda* (*Shukla Yajur-Veda*) of the *Vājasaneyi Samhita* (from *vaja*, meaning energy, strength). This was the version of the *Veda* that Yajnavalkya taught to his disciples.

The four basic *Vedas* gradually branched off into many recensions, or *sakhas*, at the hands of various teachers, after whom they were named. Thus the *Shatapatha Brahmana* of the *White Yajur-Veda* survives in the Kanva and Madhyandina recensions, according to the two disciples of Yajnavalkya. They differ from each other greatly in content as well as in the number and arrangement of the sections and chapters, the former having seventeen and the latter fourteen sections. The concluding portion of the last book of both recensions is the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*; but here again the two versions often differ. Shankaracharya based his commentary on the Kanva recension.

Each of the *Vedas* contains its own *Brahmanas*, which, as already stated, provide instructions regarding the procedures of sacrifice and also, through the *Aranyakas*, meditations and symbolic worship for the forest-dwellers. The *Aitareya* and *Kaushitaki Brahmanas* belong, for example, to the *Rig-Veda*; the *Taittiriya* and *Maitrayani*, to the *Black Yajur-Veda*; the *Shatapatha*, to the *White Yajur-Veda*; the *Chhândogya* and *Tandya*, to the *Sama-Veda*; and the *Gopatha Brahmana*, to the *Atharva-Veda*.

In most cases the concluding portion of the *Aranyaka* is the *Upanishad*—also called the Vedānta because in it the vedic wisdom reaches its culmination (*antā*). It shows the seeker the way to Liberation and the Highest Good. Usually there is a full series, from the *Samhita*, or *Mantra*, through the *Brahmana* and *Aranyaka* to the culmination in the *Upanishad*. For example, the *Taittiriya Samhita* is followed by the *Taittiriya Brahmana*,

began. There is some plausibility in this division into periods. Hindu scholars however, challenge the categorical conclusion of Western scholars who claim that no vedic literature but the *Samhita* and *Brahmana* existed before the *Upanishads*. The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* (II. iv. 10) states: 'As from a fire kindled with wet faggots diverse kinds of smoke issue, even so, my dear, the *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Atharva-Veda*, history, mythology, arts, *Upanishads*, verses, aphorisms (*sūtras*), elucidations, and explanations are like the breath of this Infinite Reality.' In the *Chhândogya Upanishad* (VII. i. 2) Narada gives an account of various subjects studied by him prior to his coming to Sanatkumara. They include—besides the vedic texts—history, mythology, the lore of portents, logic, ethics, and various other sciences. Similar instances can be given from the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* and other scriptures. All this shows that the vedic literature was extremely various even before the compilation of the *Upanishads*. It may be admitted, however, that during the four periods recognized by the Western scholars, the various designated portions of vedic literature came in sequence to the fore.

at the end of which comes the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*; and this is concluded by the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. But in rare instances an *Upanishad* may come directly at the conclusion of the *Samhita*, as is the case with the *Isha Upanishad*. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* forms the last three chapters of the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*; the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the last six chapters of the *Shatapatha Brahmana*; the *Aitareya Upanishad*, the last five chapters of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*; and the *Kena Upanishad*, the ninth chapter of the *Talavakara Brahmana* of the *White Yajur-Veda*.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF THE VEDAS

One hesitates to enter into a discussion of the time when the *Vedas* were collated. The compiler Vyasa is reputed to have been alive at the time of the battle of Kurukshetra; but when was that battle fought? Some European Indologists assign the *Vedas* to the twelfth century B.C., others to earlier ages. Max Muller, for example, supposed the date to be about 1200 B.C. but Haug, about 2400. Neither believed, of course, in the divine origin of the hymns. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an eminent Indian scholar, calculated from astronomical data and suggested that the *mantras* of the *Rig-Veda* were brought together about five thousand years before the Christian era, while, according to the orthodox tradition, the texts, even before their compilation, had been known to the *rishis* for unnumbered years. In short, the dates of the vedic hymns and collections are far from clear.

One reason for the obscurity is that the ancient Hindus lacked the historical sense. They seldom kept records of the dates of their literary, religious, or even political achievements. The *Vedas*, furthermore, which had

been handed down orally for so many centuries, were never believed by them to have had human authorship; they had either been taught to the sages by God or had become manifest of themselves to the primordial *rishis*, who were the seers of the *mantras*. Hence in India the tendency has always been to regard the *Vedas* as eternal, rather than as compositions of a certain historical moment. But even from the modern historical point of view it is not easy to determine the origin and trace the gradual development of the vedic tradition. The *Rig-Veda*, which is generally recognized as the earliest of the four, contains lofty philosophical concepts, and sentiments of a monistic cast such as Western thinkers are inclined to assign to a later and highly developed stage of human thought. 'The Reality is one,' we read, for example, 'but the sages call it by various names.' Moreover, we find that a critical spirit has already developed. The ability of the gods—who themselves exist in time and space and are victims of causality—to create the universe is questioned. Such ideas indicate a maturity of philosophical insight and by no means the primitive infancy of thought.

Following their historical method, the European Indologists regard the *Upanishads* to be of later composition than the *Mantras* and *Brahmanas*. They do not admit any of them to be earlier than the eleventh century B.C., while to many are assigned a much later date. In this respect the Hindu tradition, as we have seen, is totally different, the orthodox belief and teaching being that all parts of the *Vedas* were revealed at the same time, though the various collections might have been compiled in different periods.

(To be continued)



## ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA\*

By JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Swamiji and friends, I am grateful for this invitation to come to this celebration and I am glad to take this opportunity to express my homage to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I do not know that I am particularly fitted to speak about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, because he was a man of God and I am a man of earth and engaged in earthly activities which consume all my energy. But even a man of earth can admire and perhaps be influenced by a man of God, and so I have been admiring Godly men, though sometimes I do not altogether understand; and though I do not fully understand what they said, I have admired these great men of God, and have been influenced by reading what was written about them by their disciples. These extraordinary personalities have powerfully influenced their generation and the succeeding generations. They have powerfully influenced great men and changed the whole tenor of their lives. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa obviously was completely outside the run of average humanity. He appears to be in the tradition of the great *rishis* of India, who have come from time to time to draw our attention to the higher things of life and of the spirit. For India never ignored, in the course of her long history and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life, and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality, and at the same time she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for

the truth in their own way. Unfortunately, recently, that tradition of tolerance has been rather shaken and we have sometimes fallen into evil ways and have become narrow-minded and thought that we people who walk in a certain narrow path alone are right and others are wrong.

That has never been the tradition of India. What made India great was her broadmindedness. It was her conviction that truth is many-sided and of infinite variety. How can any man presume to say that he only has grasped the entire truth? If he is earnest in the search for truth, he may say that he saw a particular facet of truth. But how can he say that somebody else has not seen truth, unless he follows a similar path? So India encouraged the pursuit of truth, and of moral values, and that was perhaps the most distinctive feature of India's culture. And in spite of the many ups and downs of her history, something of the original impress continues throughout these long ages.

One of the effects of Sri Ramakrishna's life was the peculiar way in which he influenced other people who came in contact with him. Men often scoffed from a distance at this man of no learning, and yet when they came to him, very soon they bowed their heads before this man of God and ceased to scoff and 'remained to pray.' They gave up, many of them, their ordinary vocations in life and business and joined the band of devotees. They were great men and one of them, better known than the others, not only in India but in other parts of the world, is Swami Vivekananda. I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think that it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went

\* Speech delivered on the 114th Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on 20 March 1919.

through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them. That would, perhaps, as some of us did, enable us to catch a glimpse of that fire that raged in Swami Vivekananda's mind and heart and which ultimately consumed him at an early age. Because there was fire in his heart—the fire of a great personality coming out in eloquent and ennobling language—it was no empty talk that he was indulging in. He was putting his heart and soul into the words he uttered. Therefore he became a great orator, not with the orators' flashes and flourishes but with a deep conviction and earnestness of spirit. And so he influenced powerfully the minds of many in India and two or three generations of young men and women have no doubt been influenced by him. Other things have happened in this country and a very great man came—Gandhiji, who shook up the whole of India—another great man in the old line of *rishis* of India.

Much has happened which perhaps makes some forget those who came before and who prepared India and shaped India in those early and difficult days. If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will find is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago, and they are fresh today because, what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems. Therefore they do not become old. They are fresh even though you read them now.

He gave us something which brings us, if I may use the word, a certain pride in our inheritance. He did not spare us. He talked of our weaknesses and our failings too. He did not wish to hide anything. Indeed he should not. Because we have to correct those failings. He deals with those failings also. Sometimes he strikes hard at us, but sometimes points out the great things for which India stood and which even in the days of India's downfall made her, in some

measure, continue to be great.

So what Swamiji has written and said is of interest and must interest us and is likely to influence us for a long time to come. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit and fire, that flows through Swami Vivekananda.

We are faced in India and the world with many problems, terribly difficult problems. How are we to deal with them? There is the politician's way of dealing with them, the statesman's way if you like—I am not talking to you about the opportunists. Unfortunately, the politician or statesman has, to some extent, to be opportunist in the sense that he has to deal with things as they are, with the materials that he has. He cannot put across something which the people do not understand or cannot live up to. He has to face that difficulty always, and what is more, especially in an age which calls itself democratic—and democracy I believe is fundamentally good—but democracy also means that what you do must ultimately be understood and appreciated and acted upon by a large majority of people. If the large numbers of people do not understand or do not appreciate it, then even the truth that you possess cannot be put across to them. So the politicians and statesmen have to make, very often, compromises even with the truth because the people's receptivity of truth is not enough. I do not know whether this is good or bad. But it so happens, and looking at it from a statesman's or a politician's point of view, there appears to be no alternative, for if he were to do something else, he would

be pushed away, and others with a clearer perception of the limitations of the majority will take his place. Now, on the other hand, the prophets deal with truth in a different way. The prophet sticks to truth whatever the consequences and often because he sticks to truth, he is stoned to death or shot or killed in some other way. That is the way of the prophet. That has been the way and that will still be the way of the prophet. Of course the prophet is stoned to death or killed, but the killer does not kill the truth. Truth is greater even than the prophet and the prophet lives in that truth even more vividly than if he had been alive.

Always there are these two approaches. The approach of the prophet and the approach of the political leader or statesman. Neither approach can be said to be, at least in terms of today, or in terms of a limited period, a wholly effective approach. In long distance terms one might say, perhaps, that the prophet's approach is the best; but one cannot carry on politics or public affairs of a country in these days through long distance terms though generations later the truth will be appreciated, because he will cease to have the opportunity to carry on if he did that. Though the prophet's way may theoretically be the best, it does seem a little difficult to give effect to it during his time. On the other hand, the politician's and the statesman's way, however, well meant, leads from compromise to compromise. It is a slippery path. Once you enter that path, each succeeding compromise might lead you farther away from the truth. What one may want to do may be ignored in the existing circumstances. Shall we hold on to the truth as we see it or shall we think so much about the existing circumstances as to forget the truth itself? That is the problem that humanity and people who are responsible for the ordering of things in this world have continually to face and it is a very difficult problem, and all one can say is that in so far as it is possible, the statesman should adhere to truth, or, at any rate, he should aim at that

truth, even though he may indulge in temporary compromises. Once he loses sight of that, then he might go astray, very far. It is difficult to deal with day to day affairs without paying any heed to the understanding and receptivity of men's minds to the truth. It is important to know how far that truth is understood and finds some kind of reception in men's minds. If the politician does not do so, if his words pass over their heads, then even the prophet's words have no meaning to these people. Therefore one has to interpret that truth and limit it, even to some extent, from the point of view of man's receptivity to it.

Now we live in an age when scientific and technical advances have gone very far indeed, more especially in a country like the USA. Technically and industrially they are a very advanced country and they have achieved there a high standard of material and physical life. I have no doubt that culturally too, they are advancing in many ways. Nevertheless, it must be said of the world that man's mental or moral advance has not kept pace with his technical and scientific advance, and that is a dangerous thing, because science and technology are weapons of tremendous power. We have got these weapons, if you like, in the atomic power. Atomic energy can be used, I think, when it can be produced in simpler ways for the tremendous benefits of the human race. Atomic energy can also be used for destruction on a colossal scale of the human race. Science and technology are just things which are neither good nor bad; it is the user of them that can be good or bad. And if a human being gets these tremendous weapons it becomes very important that he should know how to use them properly; that means that he should be morally and spiritually advanced to know how to use them properly for proper needs. He should know what he is aiming at ultimately. Now it can be said that humanity as a whole, individuals apart, has not advanced to that standard yet, despite all the religions, all the churches, temples and mosques to the contrary. And

that is the misfortune of the age. We fight for our petty dogmas and petty customs amongst ourselves, calling ourselves religious men and the like, while we do not even know how to behave to our neighbours properly and decently, and the world hovers on the edge of repeated catastrophies. We find, therefore, in the world two types of forces, call them if you like, forces of destruction and forces of construction. For the moment, if I say that I have faith in the forces of construction, I cannot justify that statement except by saying that it is an act of faith on my part, there is no particular logic behind it; it is just that I believe in it, although I cannot justify it. Nevertheless, whether you believe in it or not, one should make up one's mind clearly as to how we are going to strengthen these unifying and constructive forces and oppose those forces which destroy and disrupt. And I think you can only do that if you have a certain moral foundation, certain moral concepts which will hold together your ideals and your general life. If you have none then the disruptive forces, I think, are bound to gain advantage.

Now to come back to what I began with. Men like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, men like Swami Vivekananda and men like Mahatma Gandhi are great unifying forces, great constructive geniuses of the world (*loud and prolonged cheers*) not only in regard to the particular teachings that they taught, but their approach to the world and their conscious and unconscious influence on it is of the most vital importance to us. You may or you may not accept some particular advice of Mahatmajī on economic or other grounds. But his fundamental approach to life, his constructive unifying approach as applied to various problems of India, that is of vital importance. If you do not accept that, then you really are on the side of destruction and disruption. His approach—quite apart from

the particular advice that he gave—his approach was fundamentally the approach of India, of the Indian Mind and of the Indian genius. (*Loud cheers*). Although Sri Ramakrishna was a man of God and religion, and was not saying anything about politics, it is his fundamental approach that counts. And while, I am a man of politics, not dabbling much in or saying much about other matters, spiritually and the like, nevertheless, I do feel that our public affairs and our life in general, would become much the poorer in quality, if that spiritual element and the moral standard were lacking. India, as the rest of the world, faces these difficult problems and questions, and all of us, whether as individuals, communities, groups or nations, are being put to very severe tests. Because I have faith in India, I believe that India will not only survive these tests, but will make good; because, I think, that in spite of our weakness there is fundamental vitality which has enabled it to carry on all these millennia of years and which will now function much more effectively and vividly having got the opportunity now. I have that faith; but faith is not enough. We have to work for it, and we have not only to work for it, but work for it with that clear vision before us. That vision we may apply to India, but it is essentially a larger vision to be applied to the world. It is not a narrowing vision. Our nationalism must not be a narrow nationalism. Swami Vivekananda, though a great nationalist, never preached anything else. His was a kind of nationalism which automatically slipped into Indian nationalism which was part of internationalism. So, it is that broad approach that we must learn from those great men and if we learn it and act upto it to the best of our ability, then we shall honour their memory and we shall serve our country with some advantage, and possibly also serve humanity. *Jai Hind*

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND INDIA\*

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Romain Rolland has described Sri Ramakrishna as the fulfilment of the spiritual aspirations of two hundred millions of Hindus for the past two thousand years. He has said, further, that Sri Ramakrishna was the younger brother of Christ. Thereby he implied no spiritual inferiority but merely indicated the fact that he was born in a later period in history. Sri Ramakrishna represents in our age the spirit of India, which was brought into being by the *rishis* on the banks of the Indus and Ganges, and which, since then, has been sustained by an unbroken line of prophets and saints. Mahatma Gandhi has written that his words are not those of a mere scholar but are pages from the book of life.

What is the spirit of India that found such vivid expression through the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna? The Indian philosophers have given a sacramental and spiritual interpretation of life and the universe, as opposed to the merely mechanistic and secular one. The universe, they declare, is a projection of the Lord Himself. It is an outcome of His thought. A supreme artist. He first conceived the universe in His mind and then projected it outside. The *Isha Upanishad* says that all things are permeated by the spirit of the Lord; therefore we should enjoy the world, through renunciation of the ego, and not covet other people's wealth. An illumined soul does not see nature as 'red in tooth and claw', nor does he accept ruthless competition as the means to progress. To him co-operation is a higher means of evolution, and consecration or dedication, the highest. Sri Ramakrishna was a living witness of the reality of God. He saw God

face to face; he saw Him more tangibly than we see the objects around us in the outside world. To him God was Spirit and Consciousness, a supersensuous and supramental Reality that pervades the universe and transcends it. And that same God, He affirmed, by His own inscrutable power becomes manifest in time and space, assumes various forms, and is worshipped by different religions under such names as the Father in Heaven, Jehovah, Allah, Krishna and Siva. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped God as Kali, the Divine Mother of the universe, whom he affectionately addressed as 'my Mother.' It is God who, being the inmost essence of all things, gives them the appearance of reality.

Man is rooted in Spirit. He is an eternal portion of the Divine. The *Bhagavad Gita* condemns the mechanistic view that the living soul is the outcome of the union of the male and female principles, with lust for its cause. The *Upanishad* says that man is born of bliss, after being born he is sustained by bliss, and in the end he is absorbed in bliss. It was emphasized by Swami Vivekananda that each soul is potentially divine. Man is primarily Spirit, and he is endowed with a body; he is not merely a body endowed with a soul. It is this that makes the difference between the spiritual and the secular view of life.

The divinity of the soul is the unshakable foundation of true freedom and of true democracy. Every man is entitled to respect, because he reflects the Godhead, no matter what be the outward mask he wears. Sri Ramakrishna regarded every man and woman as a veritable representation of Narayana. Even the fallen woman, whom society despises as unclean, he regarded as a form of the Divine Mother. Once someone spoke to him about showing kindness to living creatures.

\* From the speech delivered at the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday, New Delhi, 20 March 1940.

Sri Ramakrishna became excited and said that a man's attitude toward others should be not one of kindness but one of service. He asked Swami Vivekananda to commune with God not only in the depths of meditation but also through service to man—especially the sick, the poor, the ignorant, the destitute. Later Swami Vivekananda advised his followers to practise work and worship as twin disciplines for the unfoldment of their inner life. Every *sannyasin* of the Ramakrishna Order takes the two vows of dedicating his life to the liberation of the self from ignorance and to service of humanity. Centuries before him, the great Sankaracharya said that a man should first realize his oneness with Brahman and then look upon all beings as manifestations of that same Brahman. The Hindu ideal of service does not correspond to the vague secular humanism practised in the West. It is the outcome of a direct perception of the Godhead in every living creature.

Sri Ramakrishna experienced the unity of Existence, which is a unique contribution of the Hindu spiritual culture. Scientists and idealistic philosophers find non-duality in the realms of matter and of mind. To Sri Ramakrishna this unity, as Spirit and Consciousness, pervades the whole universe, with all its animate and inanimate creatures. We read in his biography that when two boatmen on the Ganges quarrelled and struck each other, the blows were impressed on his own back. Another day someone happened to walk on the tender green grass of the lawn of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar, and Sri Ramakrishna uttered cries of excruciating pain, his chest becoming red and bruised. His measureless love and compassion for humanity were the logical result of this experience of unity. This experience is the spiritual foundation of the Golden Rule and of all moral precepts. Man should love his neighbour because his neighbour is none other than his own self. Man's neighbours are not only his kith and kin, or his fellow believers

in a common religious faith, but include the whole of humanity, nay, all created beings. He can never be happy or at peace by causing suffering to others, even if they be in a distant part of the world. A single standard of ethics for all mankind is the only effective means of attaining world peace. As long as there remain one standard of justice for the strong and another for the weak, one standard for the white and another for the coloured, one standard for the brahmins and another for the untouchables, one standard for the Hindus and another for the Moslems, there will be no peace in the world. An illumined person like Sri Ramakrishna regards happiness and unhappiness in others as he regards them in himself.

Another important message of Sri Ramakrishna to a world torn asunder by religious bigotry is the harmony of religions. It was his favourite saying that religions are so many paths to reach the same goal. His was not the theoretical attitude cherished by many religious liberals. He actually practised the disciplines of the various faiths and found God alone to be their ultimate goal. Once he admonished Swami Vivekananda to look upon even a certain cult which indulged in immoral practices as a door to God's mansion—may be the back door, through which the scavenger entered. A devotee need not see it, but it was a door just the same. God is the centre upon which the radii of the different faiths converge. The farther one is from the centre, the greater is the distance one finds between one radius and another. The farther we move from God, the greater are the differences we find between one religion and another. We quarrel over the empty baskets, while their precious contents have slipped into the ditch. Sri Ramakrishna has taught us to show to other faiths not merely toleration, which carries an undertone of arrogance, but positive respect, which proceeds from the perception of God alone as the essence of all faiths. Let Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians

and Jews be genuine devotees of their respective faiths, and they will surely hail one another as fellow-travellers to the common goal of Truth. We need Sri Ramakrishna's message of harmony in this world of ours, where there are, alas, enough religions to help men hate one another but not enough religious spirit to promote love and goodwill.

To Sri Ramakrishna religion was realization. It did not mean simply believing ; it meant being and becoming. Knowledge, he said, must be accompanied by actual perception. He was a true scientist in the field of religion. He did not accept anything on blind faith, nor did he ever impose anything on others. He experimented with the injunctions of the scriptures, observed their results, verified them with his own experiences, and finally drew his conclusions. Often he asked God to send him a disciple who would doubt his experiences. Swami Vivekananda was such a disciple. He laughed at the Master's visions. But Sri Ramakrishna never asked his disciple to accept his words blindly. He met the challenge of Swami Vivekananda's intellect with a superior intellect. What doubt can remain before actual experience ? Many are the people who become agnostics or atheists simply because they do not find in their church or temple an idea of God big enough to satisfy their hearts and their intellects. The true Hindu religion has never asked its devotees to surrender reason. The *Upanishads* prescribe hearing, reasoning, and contemplation as the three steps to the vision of Truth. The evidence of others, reason, and experience constitute its validity. There is nothing in genuine Hinduism that is opposed to the true scientific method.

Even a casual visitor to Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna lived, could not but be struck by the joy that the Master radiated. He often prayed to the Divine Mother not to make him cross-grained, pain-hugging sadhu. That religion is an affirmative, joyous experience, and not a negative nonsense, he

amply demonstrated. Spiritual bliss is different from sensuous pleasure. The latter is unreal, having a beginning and an end, and is a source of suffering. Spiritual bliss is eternal and real ; it is the bestower of peace. Sri Ramakrishna saw everywhere the manifestation of God, who is the embodiment of bliss. The world conceived of as divorced from God is without significance, like a dream. But the *Upanishads* never say that the world is unreal in the sense that a barren woman's son is unreal. Where the universe is described as a dream, the implication is only that it is unsubstantial when conceived of as divorced from Brahman. Two important schools of Vedanta, namely Dualism and Qualified Non-dualism, accept the reality of the tangible universe. The Non-dualists call it *maya*. This means simply that between the two orders of experience, namely, the transcendental and the empirical, one cannot establish a logical relationship. Before the transcendental, the empirical is non-existent. Further, the Non-dualists use the theory of *maya* not to prove the unreality of names and forms, but to demonstrate that the universe is Brahman. 'Thou art Brahman' and 'All that exists is Brahman' are two of the great conclusions of the Vedantic seers.

Thus one can regard the universe from two standpoints : relative and transcendental. From the relative standpoint, which is the one accepted by the average man, time, space, and causality are real. Good and Evil exist and one must try to eliminate the evil and multiply the good. There are four ends of human life : *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. *Dharma*, or righteousness, is the very basis of life and should determine the relationship in society between man and man. *Artha*, or wealth, serves a very important purpose and is an effective means to express our fellowship with others. *Kama*, or sense pleasure, is also praiseworthy. By cultivating aesthetic sensitivity one appreciates art, music, and literature. Without it life remains inadequate.

*Moksha*, or the realization of the Infinite, is the culmination of man's spiritual evolution. There is no real happiness in the finite. Without the ideal of the Infinite, ethics is transformed into an instrument for man's self-interest, wealth becomes a means to satisfy his greed and his lust for power, and sense-pleasures degenerate into sensuality. The Hindu seers have given a comprehensive view of life. Boyhood should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, youth to the enjoyment of material pleasure, old age to the practice of contemplation, and the hour of death to communion with the Godhead.

The illumined soul, on the other hand, views the universe from the transcendental standpoint. He has gone beyond good and evil, pain and pleasure, and all the pairs of opposites. But by no means can he indulge in unethical actions. He is free from the limitations of time and space. For him ego and desires have ceased to exist. To him everything is Brahman. But he is neither a recluse nor misanthrope. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that he devotes himself to the welfare of others. And to the truth of this statement the lives of Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda bear testimony.

The Indo-Aryan seers called the knowledge of the relative world the *aparā vidyā*, or inferior knowledge, and the Knowledge of the Absolute, the *parā vidyā*, or Superior Knowledge. Though the Knowledge of the Absolute was the goal, yet the knowledge of the universe was not neglected by them. The *Mundaka Upanishad* says that both forms of knowledge are to be cultivated. According to the *Katha Upanishad*, the fetters of the heart are cut asunder and all doubts set at naught when one gains the knowledge of both the Absolute and the universe.

The culture of India has been determined by the religious experiences of her seers and prophets. It is a spiritual culture that proclaims man to be a spiritual entity with a spiritual end. The Hindu view of life is neither pessimistic nor otherworldly. It gives

a spiritual interpretation of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the watchwords of modern European culture. The Hindu religion shows man the way to ultimate freedom and bliss through a disciplined enjoyment of the legitimate pleasures and through the fulfilment of just aspirations. The ideal of *jīvanmukti*, freedom while living in the body, is the grandest contribution of the Hindu culture. Man can acquire mastery over his baser passions and attain perfection in this very life. Sri Ramakrishna's own life shows how the spirit of man can keep body and senses under complete control. It is an effective answer, at the same time, to the charges often made against the Hindu religion that it is anti-social, pessimistic, intolerant, visionary, and opposed to reason and the scientific method.

Since India has attained her freedom, we have been busy making plans for her future reconstruction. Sometimes the heart sinks to think of the mountain-high obstacles that stand in our way. The future becomes blurred to our vision. At such a time, it will be well to remember the words of Winston Churchill: 'Those who want to see farthest into the future of a nation must look farthest into its past.' Our past failures should not bewilder us. In the words of Lord Acton, it is a false study of history that emphasizes a nation's three hundred years' failure and overlooks her three thousand years' achievements.

India has a definite message for the world. Thoughtful people in the West have been realizing the inadequacy of the mechanistic interpretation of life. The resources of science have culminated in the creation of the atom bomb. Technology, which has been promoting the creature comforts of the Western peoples, has not been an unmixed blessing. The emphasis on science and technology has distracted man's attention from the spiritual value of life and is undermining the moral and spiritual foundation of society. In spite of its many physical amenities, the West is distracted



and confused. Many eyes are turned to India for light and vision.

The malady of the world is a spiritual malady. Economic maladjustment, political confusion, and moral disintegration are but the outer symptoms of this deep-seated illness. The world is suffering from greed, lust for power, and sensuality, which Sri Ramakrishna described by the expressive word *kamini-kanchan*. Today aggressive evil is abroad. Its challenge can be met only by aggressive goodness. The Hindu view of life has a great deal to suggest for the correcting of the present human situation. The ideals of renunciation and service, set forth by our *rishis*, are a sure panacea for the ills of the world.

One of the most significant events of our age is the meeting of East and West. The West has been the bearer of a great culture. It has promoted man's physical well-being. Here in India we desperately need the knowledge of science and technology to remove our ignorance and poverty and our present social stagnation. In their absence, our ideals of the divinity of man and the unity of Existence will remain mere abstractions.

But the spiritual culture of India will serve as the unfailing pole-star to guide our Ship of State through the sea of darkness and confusion. Consciousness of the eternal spirit of India and pride in our matchless religious heritage will give us courage and hope in the present struggle for our national existence. It is true that our *Sanatana Dharma* has been abused. Heavy encrustations have hidden its shining truth. But the way does not lie through neglecting it or directing our national aspirations into altogether new channels. Let us study the way of our forefathers side by side with the findings of modern science. Whatever of it is unworthy or effete will automatically be discarded. Let us remain loyal to what is eternal in the legacy of our *rishis* and learn in humility what is healthy in other cultures. Let us remove the ignorance, poverty, and stagnation of the masses through knowledge learnt from the scientific and dynamic West. Thus rejuvenated, India will once more assume her place as the spiritual leader of the world. This is our responsibility; for India is the last great hope of humanity. May we not fail humanity in this hour of its crisis!

## HOW SHALL I FIND GOD WHEN I HAVE LOST HIM?

By GERALD HEARD

This is the second of the three key questions asked of masters of spirituality. This question, naturally follows on the first—How can I love God? We have been told that we love him by wishing it, by the will. This advice when it is followed leads inevitably to our 'getting results.' We find that something has begun to happen. It may be what we hoped and wished. It may not be. But it will be something that intensely interests us. We may be able to describe it by the terms that others have used. We may not be

able to describe it at all. One thing however is so probable that, (though it is not so certain as the fact that we shall find that something of strange importance has happened), it may be said to be almost as certain as that:—We shall begin to think that what we have found, however dim and odd it is and however hard to tell anyone else of, is something that we have gained for good. We may say we are converted for life, 'have a new heart' was the old phrase, or we may say we have found the autotherapy that suits us at

last, that we do know ourselves and have penetrated down to self-knowledge and interior peace. One thing we are sure of is that we shall never lose this state and go back to what we were before, any more than we shall once again become an adolescent. Indeed one of the surest symptoms of this state is that we feel very mature, really grown up, rather solemn, quietly assuredly rational, patient with others who seem to be curiously unsure. In short we are in a state of self-contained discreet self-satisfaction. Then it goes. We may do something that accounts for this. We may have done nothing in particular. Just being comfortable in the way described above seems enough—and certainly it should be—to lose us our modest complacency. Then the discomfort may well be intense. We had become used to a certain experience and that experience not only freed us from a lot of rather silly and some harmful ways we had of killing time and soothing our sense of futility, before we found this other way. That experience made us able to entertain ourselves and not be frightened or disgusted at ourselves, as we had never been able to do and to be before. If religion is, as Dr. Whitehead used to say, 'What a man does with his solitude,' this new exercise of using the will to make acts of comprehensive interior attention certainly made loneliness more interesting than most company. If we find that theological language suits us best, we have to own that we are in a terrible muddle because, having thought we found God for good, we now have to own that we have lost Him.

If we have been having feelings—however quiet and refined—the glow has gone out of them. If we have been enjoying thoughts that seemed to clinch matters—we find that the neat bindings have become loose. After a time we find that this losing is, if not a 'Night of the Soul' at least part of its spiritual exercising—painful but helpful—if we know what to do about it. Eckhart gave the answer

to the question, what am I to do when I found that I have lost God—Go back to where you last had Him. Eckhart does not seem to have blamed the person who asked. He seems to have taken for granted that this losing was part of the process of learning—as the lung has to empty to take a new breath, as the mind when learning a language seems to have phases of forgetting before going on to a new and wider grasp of remembering. The author of the *Imitation* certainly thought these fluctuations were unavoidable and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* in one of his shorter works likens them to the tidal and wave conditions that a voyager on the sea must be prepared to find and in which he must learn to handle his ship.

The Desert Fathers held strongly that 'Short Prayer Pierces Heaven.' As sustained pressure of unwavering attention is impossible to most of us, we must, and can by a series of blows, or lance thrusts as the *Cloud of Unknowing* calls the process, pierce for moments into that upper atmosphere where we could not sustain ourselves. And, though we cannot yet stay there we can bring back something that makes us more resolved to continue striving to cause what has still to be only an instant, to become eternal.

Certainly the time when anyone never loses hold on God would seem to be equated with the time when they have attained to constant practice of the Presence, and surely that must be very close to the Unitive State? Father Baker notes, with that curiously pleasant diagnostic detail he employs, that the soul was bound in the twentyfour hours to go through a series of such dislocations, interruptions of its current from its source. He thought that for 20 minutes after a meal it was not possible to retain the awareness of the Presence of God and that sleep generally 'de-ordinated' the attention. Perhaps some people would deny that—but he certainly had much experience and the state that he was referring to was probably a very dis-

tinct and clear condition of recollectedness or to use a favorite word of his 'abstraction.' That point will come up again—the point of the degree of 'abstraction' or detachment that the soul has attained—when the third question and answer is being discussed in the third article. Here it seems interesting to note that man would appear to be a creature whose consciousness is an 'alternating current' rather than a continuous one. We are tidal creatures. There seem to be in the daily cycle three such rhythms and each one of them may—may be should—strain and if we are not ready detach our hold on the unseen Eternal. There is the tide of sleep-waking, the wave of the diet-nutritional rhythm and the ripple of the breath. Perhaps behind that again is the heartbeat. Each of these sway and swing the frame of mind and angle of thought and base of feeling out of its position and throw it into another. May it not be that this is a necessary part of our training in achieving constancy of consciousness? Even if we leave go we are free to catch hold again before we have been swept too far from our moorings. And if we do not leave go, the strain, like the gentle pull on the thread when it is being spun, gives us tensile strength. Consciousness has continually to be reminded that it must keep conscious or it ceases to be so. Of course at the beginning we all know how slow we are to wake up to the fact that we have fallen asleep. That is the great value of following a rule of life. For then when we have fallen to sleep round comes a duty, an 'office' a call to prayer and, though we feel as uninclined to it as we feel uninclined to get up out of a warm bed at two in the morning, we have to do it whether we like or no—and that however badly we do it is better than letting the whole thing slide because 'one does not feel in the mood.' Of course one does not—the mood has gone and it is for us to make the next one.

The spiritual life is then for all beginners and perhaps for all the middling lot which the

western mystics call 'Proficients' and we might term 'professionals,' a constant and ever more rapid Recollection—another word much used by occidental religions. We are continually pulling ourselves together because we have in the stream and fluctuation of time and under the wash of events, begun to fall to pieces and to become completely unravelled. Progress in the spiritual life, one supposes, might be gauged by the speed with which one gets on to the unravelling before too many stitches have been dropped and unknitted. Most people find that they are getting a little handier at the task as the years go by, if they really think the matter is as important as thought would seem to show that it is. Of course if one lets oneself become badly 'de-ordinated,' engrossed in some addiction of the body, some anxiety of possessions, some desire for social approval, then that is as though one's knitting had caught in the paws of an extremely agile and ill-willed monkey. Before the remnants can be recovered little may be left of long periods of patient work. Francois de Sales himself said he might easily lose what had taken him many years to work—in a quarter of an hour—one outburst of hastiness or of what the world would call 'righteous anger' might prove fatal to the endeavour of the large part of a life-time. It appears that our knitting of ourselves is always done, till we are out of the body, and perhaps long after, by 'chain-Stitch' and not 'lock-Stitch.' But however far we have become unravelled there is always this sovran advice to help us back. We have lost God, but once we had Him, not of course in actuality or we would never have lost Him, but in potentiality; we were on the way, on the trail. All we have to do is to trace back to that moment and there start again. Of course, though the advice is clear, it is hard. Discouragement keeps on tempting us to cheat and advises us to try and start where we are. That will not do. Recollection is, in one of its meanings, remembering. We have, like senile people in their

talking, wandered, and we must go back to the last time we were coherent. We must trace back to where the deviation and the dissipation began.

But as we continue, we do find that we do not have to go quite so far back, each time we slip, as we had to do so earlier. That does not mean that the task gets easier. For the goal is constant recollectedness, each act performed in the sight of God and then discharged and left with contrition but not with remorse or even regret. We have to work up the whole series of approaches that lead to perfect instantaneity. When we are past being swept away by passions then we have to learn to correct the tidal displacement of mood and consciousness made by the tide of sleep. Some Sufis say that it takes several years before the sleep-mind will accept the attitude of the waking-mind. And even when it does, most of us know that it is still very capricious. Sometimes in sleep we can control the dream, sometimes we can detach ourselves from it knowing that both the dream and earthly waking are dreams. But most of the time we are its object and not it ours. Then there is becoming aware of the optimum psychophysical lucidity which appears somewhere in the alimentary cycle. Swami Brahmananda thought that the best condition for meditation was when the stomach was partly filled. Sir John Woodroff quotes a Tantric authority saying that the stomach should not be wholly empty because this produces a slight but definitely distracting tension in the mind. And of course about the care of the breath so that the lucidity that opens between each inhalation and exhalation may be caught, about this Sanskrit authorities

have told us much. Every one of these 'dips' after a 'crest' will tend to 'ebb us out' until we lose touch with the shore we should hold to and find ourselves adrift. But Eckhart seems to teach, and experience would seem to confirm, that if we would have the courage to trace back the moment we discovered our loss, we should be able to find the spot where it began and once there we could start again. Again of course temptation to discouragement appears. We feel we cannot go on this hindsight search time and again. We fear we are making no progress if we spend nearly all our time going back. But this may be a complete misapprehension of our process and progress. For each of these returns is really far more like a zig-zag ascent in which, it is true, after going right we then turn left, but always the traverse whether to right or left goes up and each drive is on a higher level than the one before. By this going back we are learning two essential things; self-knowledge—the structure of the human mind and the kind of things that throw it off its rational attentions and further we are learning humility. This humility is the real stuff, for it leads to true discrimination so that at last we can make the distinction between ourselves and the thing that is always straying. When we reach that stage it would appear that we discover that the straying part of ourselves loses its power to wander. We begin to make the final recollection, we at last 'come to ourselves,' we remember who we are. And once we do that the journey is over. For the whole notion that we were far away from our Source and Goal was the illusion and the distance we were from God was never more than the depth of our illusory self-love.

'You will see God if your love for Him is as strong as that of the attachment of the worldly-minded person for things of the world.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK OF POPULAR HINDUISM

BY DHIRENDRANATH MUKHERJI

Hinduism as it is popularly practised will remain unintelligible until we know something of its philosophical background. The tendency of Hindu polytheism is definitely monistic. The metaphysical outlook of the Hindus can be said to rest upon two schools of thought—the Sankhya and the Vedanta. Without entering into much scholarly discussions about them, we may say that the Vedanta tries to determine the nature of the Absolute and the Sankhya, of *Prakriti*—the infinite substratum of all material evolution. The metaphysics adopted by the Hindus as a basis of their theology is a combination of the two. Accepting both the speculations as true in their respective provinces, and considering them as not wholly unconnected, the Hindu mind in its religious cravings made a synthesis of the two, and to this synthetic whole traced the hierarchy of their gods and goddesses. The modes of their treatment are both psychological and idealistic. In the evolution of this pantheon, the element of nature has never been lost sight of, nor has the mystery of human mind been overlooked. The nature of this great fundamental basis recognized by theology and its relation to the manifold of creation have been nicely illustrated in the following obeisance to Brahman :

*Avyakta-vyaktarupaya nirgunaya  
gunatmane  
Samasta-jagadadhara-murtaye Brahmane  
namah.*

'We bow to the Great Brahman—the Unmanifest which seems to be manifested, the Unconditioned which assumes condition, the Form of all forms, the Ground of this universe.' Now this great creative principle, this Absolute inspired by the desire to become many, this Universal Person or Saguna Brahman, is the great source from which all the divinities of the Hindu pantheon have sprung

into being. They are but his emanations or *vibhūtis*, given independent name and form for the purpose of worship. The Hindus never believe that they are essentially different from Him, but think that they bear the same relationship to Him, as parts do to the whole, as particulars to the Universal, and as the appearances of an object seen from different view-points to the object itself.

Yet the Hindus have a peculiar way of viewing these separate aspects of the Supreme Being, these deities of their adoration. Although they are essentially ideal in character, they are not without personalities, though their personalities are derived from the personality of God. Thus they are both dependent on, and independent of, God—just as in a living organism, the cells building the body are both independent of and dependent on the body, into which they enter as constituents, or as in a society, the individual members are independent units as well as subservient parts, of the social entity.

If we take the social whole as a person, then the constituent units are also persons—restricted persons—having only limited scope and activities. Thus the personality of the Supreme Being is a larger one, containing all the lesser personalities within itself. This type of relationship has been clearly hinted at in the grand paورانic text of the Hindus, the *Chandi*, where the Great Goddess, who is recognized as the ultimate ground of all realities, has also been represented as all the dualities of life and nature, such as motion and rest, energy and lethargy, strength and weakness, love and hatred, shame and glory, and so on, meaning thereby that She is both analytically and synthetically the one. She is the potential of the Supreme Being, inherent in His very nature. But She is both a state and a person, and being invoked by Brahma, revealed Herself before him in the

form of a woman. She is the cause of all personalities and even of the personality of the Supreme Being Himself, upon whom She exercises an independent influence. All the goddesses who fought on her side in the war with the *asuras* have been described as her emanations, who afterwards merged in her and became one with her. We find here an interblending of the Sankhya and the Advaita Vedanta views. That which is *maya* or great illusion of the Advaita Vedanta is *Prakriti* or the great ground of diversity of forms in the Sankhya. This personality, multiplying itself into many personalities without being any the lesser thereby in its essence, is the peculiar characteristic of the Hindu view of evolution. It is like kindling one fire from another fire. The Hindu philosophers in describing the relationship between Brahman and the evolved parts, and in emphasizing how the All is not affected in its entity by this evolution, say :

*Purnamadah purnamidam purnatpurnamudachyate*

*Purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavashishyate.*

'That is Full and this is Full, and the Full emanates from the Full, but when the Full is taken away from the Full, what remains behind is also Full.'

The Hindu philosophers believe that a living personality cannot be a personality at all, unless it is personal, both in the aggregate and in the constituent parts, for, how can a life be life in any sense, unless it is life all over, without the darkening, disconnecting interception of death to obstruct its steady flow, because in case of any such interception, the entire process would mean a negation. Death is nothing but a matter of notion, a reflection or shadow of our limited nature on the bright effulgence of immortality, it is a *maya* or illusion, the same illusion which is at the root of all creations of name and form. This pan-life or all-life theory may be best illustrated by an analogy. Let us take the case of a

huge dynamo, where millions of units of electricity are being constantly generated and used for the purpose of lighting a city. Now when this total quantity of electricity has the power of blazing up into one great light, its constituent units are not also destitute of that power individually, for they too manifest themselves into so many smaller lights, whenever they find an occasion. Thus the total electric production of the dynamo is light both in the whole and in the parts; rather it manifests itself more in the parts—the total remaining unmanifest on the whole. Hence the conception of Brahman with the potentiality of manifestation, being unmanifest on the whole, but manifested only partially does not seem to be a wholly absurd one. Taking the question of personality in this connection, we can push the analogy a little further. If we take the total quantity of electricity as one person, then its whole flow is inspired with that personality, and every individual moment in it is no less a person than the entity itself. In this light we should understand the emanation theory of the Hindu theology. We may then understand how various gods and goddesses, arising out of one Supreme Deity, may themselves be treated as independent persons.

We can approach this question of relationship from another standpoint. Brahman, which is both being and not-being, the ground of all possible forms and also the Beyond, is itself formless, not because It is incapable of assuming form, but because being resolvable into all sorts of form, It cannot be identified with any particular one. It can be recognized in a form, only from a subjective standpoint, or in other words, by the recognition of a *bhakta* or devotee within the limit of his capacity. But in that case Brahman no longer remains Brahman or Absolute, but becomes a *deva* or god with a definite name and form peculiar to the taste, need, and mental constitution of the votary himself. Hence there are as many gods and goddesses as there are

votaries, all of whom are real taking after (so to say) the realities of the worshipper. Thus these gods and goddesses are, in one respect, but the ideal selves or extended selves of the votaries themselves—their real selves in the Brahman, while they themselves are the narrower expressions of these ideals in the grosser plane of worldly existence. This naturally reminds us of Plato's ideas, but while Plato's ideas are only class ideas, the originals of the classes which appear in nature and which are but their imperfect reflections, the Hindu ideas or ideals are real individual ideas—all the individual reals in existence are nothing but the expressions in a narrow circle of these ideas with dim circumscribed light, owing to the grossness of the plane where they temporarily reveal themselves. This is the meaning of the text *aham devah nach anyasmi* etc. 'I am the deity himself and no one else.' There is no intrinsic difference between the supersensible ideal and the empirical real, the difference lies only in the way of seeing things. The particulars of the world, seen from the standpoint of the universal, appear only dim, lustreless, and narrow. just as in another way, the huge orbs of the sky, looked from our earthly plane, appear small and twinkling. The cause of this altered look lies in the limitation of our vision. This is the reason why every individual in him has a natural craving to be greater than what he is, to rise higher than where he is placed by his birth, and also the reason why he is never satisfied with whatever progress he makes in his life. According to the Hindu view, this is the call of the Eternal in him, an unconscious quest for his ideal self, the end of which lies only in the realization of that self—or in other words, in the realization of his divinity. Hence the Hindus believe that every one is a seeker of his god, consciously or unconsciously, to find whom is the one object of his life. Other aims and objects which he may have, and which, for his circumscribed vision, may appear to him very important and prominent, are only subordinate to this one great object.

This, then is the meaning of the Hindu polytheism, which, we thus see, is nothing but the elaboration of a highly developed monotheism.

But from what we have said above about the invocation of a deity by his votary, and about putting into it the life of the worshipper himself, there is the risk of this deification being misunderstood as only a creation of fancy, an idle self-delusion of fools. But this, by no means, is so. From the Sankhya standpoint, reality, as we understand it, or more properly materiality, is only an attribute of form—whatever has a form, idea or matter, has a reality—subtle or gross as the case may be; thus there is also reality both in universal and particular. If we trace the origin of the reality from the universal ideal, and gradually come down to the particular and concrete, then the more ideal an object is, the more it is real; hence our deities are by no means fictitious, they are more real than we ourselves are. We only try to have a glimpse of them through our mental vision. As regards the question of putting life (*pranapratishta*) into the deities to be worshipped we must remember that the universal and the particulars are like concentric circles. The universal is the wider circle of light, of which the particular is the narrower form, albeit grosser and more obscure, nevertheless one of light. If we are to make a big fire ablaze, that which burns low and in a small way in the dim lamp, must be enlivened and extended. There is no reason to believe that the light in its revived form is no longer light, and that the anticipation of it in a larger form is also false. This being so, why should the conception of divinity which, as we have already stated, is only the idea of our larger self not be real and alive—only life should be inspired in them by extending the boundary of our life-consciousness. Then again if the Supreme Being, in His differentiated nature, be the aggregate of all cosmic existences, each individual existence is but a point or viewpoint within it, and each, from its own *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda* nature,

has a vision of the whole from its own *locus standi*, which is but its world. Thus there are so many worlds of ideas within the greater world of one Creative Idea. The Universal Creative Idea is there to give all these particular ideas system, order, and unity. The particulars are like Leibnitz's monads and the universal is like the Monad of monads. If the Universal be real why should not the partial views thereof from particular standpoints be also relatively real? Hence the Hindu view of deities is not quite a fiction as it is sometimes supposed to be. But perhaps we digress. What is our point here is this, that the individual viewing the whole from his own standpoint sees the reflection of his own life in the projected greater life of the universe and tries to realize it. This greater or purer vision of himself, untrammelled by any worldly obscurity, which rises up before his mind's eye is his deity and the effort to realize it is his *pūja*. As by meditating on this ideal self, one can transcend one's physical or psychical disabilities and the narrowness that is attendant in one's worldly life, the Hindus believe that by repeated *pūja* exercises they may have their minds chastened, and may also be lifted up one day to the purer region of idealism. As the gods and goddesses are but the modes of expression of the Supreme Being, by using them as stepping stones, they hope to reach God in the long run. Had not the Pure Being been uppermost in his thought Vyasa would never have uttered his famous apology for trying to meditate on the Lord as with a form and for singing praise of Him in words. Yet he had to do both, because practical necessity in the province of spiritual advance-

ment demanded this of him.

This, then, is the path cut out by the Hindus for the spiritual guidance of their numerous votaries who are in different stages of mental development, and herein also lies the justification of their psycho-metaphysical polytheistic conception. They could not be satisfied with the usual prayer programme of the other religious sects which, as a practical measure, did not seem to them quite enough for effecting a true spiritual progress. Hence the elaborate formulation of a great many *pūja* exercises according to the varying needs of the different classes of votaries was deemed necessary. Their highest daily prayer, *gayatri*, which is nothing but an invocation of divine light for awakening metaphysical vision, when compared with the well-known prayers of other religions, may also show wherein the Hindus differ from these people in their spiritual outlook. But this peculiar outlook has been systematically misunderstood, partly owing to the intricacy of the subject itself and partly owing to the general apathy towards spirituality in these days of materialism. It is undeniably true that, owing to its very ancient nature, Hinduism has not been able to keep its meaning always clear and that being often over-burdened, as in the present, with many unmeaning and useless practices, it has been in many cases more or less mechanical; yet the defect is due to a lamentable forgetfulness of the true aim, and to a general want of enlightened guidance. Notwithstanding all these, its truth cannot be denied, and the need of its teaching has never been more keenly felt than now.

'Never forget the glory of human nature! We are the greatest God that ever was or ever will be. Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which *I am*.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

*An Introduction to the Study of the Upanishads (I)* by Swami Nikhilananda is from the author's forthcoming book *The Upanishads* to be shortly published in the USA by Harper & Brothers. The book will be complete in five volumes and will contain, besides a General Introduction, the translation of the original text of the major Upanishads with a running commentary giving the substance of Shankara's *bhashya* on them all. The present article is the first of a series of three from the general introduction of the book and will be found very helpful by those who are in need of some clear general ideas before proceeding to a detailed study of the particular Upanishads. ....

The present issue contains the two speeches, one by the Indian Premier Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the other by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, delivered at the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday at New Delhi on 20 March 1949. They are models of clarity in thought and expression, and deserve to be taken to heart by all who long for a happy, united, and glorious India standing as a light to the world which does not now know which way to turn to avoid the destruction with which the naked pursuit of power threatens it. ...

Sri Dhirendranath Mukherji explains in *The Philosophical Outlook of Popular Hinduism* the metaphysical basis on which the practice of worship in India rests. Worship is a means of approach to the Ideal that is one to all, but presents myriads of forms to different worshippers. Such forms are not imaginary in the sense the word is used, but real entities related to the mental development of individual worshippers. Because this metaphysical basis is not often known and the real object of worship missed, Hinduism has long been a victim of general ignorance which describes it as polytheistic.

### THE SECULAR DEMOCRATIC STATE ?

Our approach to the problem set by the above caption must now be different from what it has been. Recently, there have appeared three pronouncements, in different contexts, which are hope-inspiring.

In connection with Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, it has been said in a leading article in a local paper :

'It will be a bad day for our politics, and even worse for our religion, if there is any section of our people, however small, which believes that political and even religious aims can be achieved by murder. Resort to violence is the very negation of law. In politics, it is a repudiation of the basic principle of democracy. To have recourse to it in the name of religion is an outrage on religion itself. In the higher reaches of Hindu thought, philosophers like Shankara took the doctrine of divinity in man one stage higher to assert the identity of the Human Soul with the Divine Spirit. All through history, India has prided herself on the catholicity of her outlook which enabled her to retain within the Hindu fold every school of religious thought from Advaita to atheism. Those who seek to introduce the element of fanaticism in our culture are doing violence to everything for which India has always stood, its genius, tradition, culture, and civilisation.'

In the course of a message to the convenor of the Conference on Culture, Religion, and Morals, to be held in Lucknow, our Prime Minister said :

'... I cannot speak about religion because that word has so many meanings in different minds and the kind of religion we see about us in every country is more of a husk and a ritual than anything having a real content. Because of this present-

day aspect of religion I have not felt attracted to it though I have little doubt that in its wider and deeper conception, it can be something of great value to life. But that conception is so far removed from what religion is thought to be today by most persons that to use the word may very well produce a wrong impression in many people's minds.... There is a danger, however, that we may lose ourselves in vague and metaphysical generalizations, which, though seeming to embody high truths, do not help us very much in our daily tasks. It may be necessary to survey a wide field in order to get a true perspective. But that may also lead us into a dense forest of ideals and problems and not help us to understand clearly the duty of the moment. There is always a tendency for majority of us to seek escapism in high ideals and fine phrases and not trouble to relate them to the business of life as it is today....'

Soon after, speaking on the banks of the Meshvi, the Prime Minister declared :

'The secular character of the Indian State must be maintained at all costs. This did not mean they are to be irrelegious or a nation of atheists. Secular State only meant that every individual in it was free to profess any faith he chose and no disability would rest on him by reason of his faith.'

This, however, is only a re-affirmation of one of the Fundamental Rights proposed in the Constitution which reads :

'... Subject to public order, morality and health, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion ; every religious denomination will have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, to manage its own affairs in matters of religion....' But the question remains why should the Governments of the Union, at the Centre, and of the 'States' as such, repudiate all responsibility for foster-

ing the religions of their subjects especially when in connection with the controversy over provincial languages the Government allow mixed populations, in contiguous areas to be taught, in the schools, not only the language of the province wherein the students happen to reside, but also their mother tongues ? The importance of providing the young generation with a catholic religious background seems not to have been realized in spite of the examples of Russia and Germany. What is clearly indicated is that the Government should create a body of men which would advise on the sort of religious instruction to be imparted in the schools to all those who profess nominally different faiths which essentially are one, so as to bring up a generation which will not tolerate a divorce between the cultural and moral standards and the business of life,' nor allow 'cultural values to progressively lose their significance and fade away' giving place 'to vulgarity, petty-mindedness and an absence of any conception of obligations and duties.' Obligations and duties, thought in the present day to be ethical commandments, really derive from Religion, being aspects of the Brotherhood of Man on which Mahatma Gandhi insisted as the one Truth, which to him, with its implication of non-violence, was God.

But apart from the teachings of religions professed in India—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Guru Nanak's creed, etc. let us cast a glance at what the thinkers, our favourite authors of the West, have said on the subject of Religion.

Burke, the author of *Reflections on the French Revolution* and of *Sublime and the Beautiful* says :

'We know and we feel inwardly that religion is the basis of civil society and the source of all good and all comforts.... All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust ; and that they are to account for their conduct

in that trust to the one great Master, Author and Founder of society....'

Or take Disraeli :

'The most powerful principle which governs man is the religious principle.... A wise government, allying itself with religion, would as it were consecrate society and sanctify the State.... Society has a soul as well as a body.... The spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions. No government can endure which does not recognize that for its foundation, and no legislation last which does not flow from that fountain. The principle may develop itself in manifold forms, in the shape of many creeds and many churches. But the principle is divine. As time is divided into day and night, so religion rests upon the Providence of God and the responsibility of man.'

It follows that there can be no genuine statesmanship which is not founded upon a religious view of the basis of civil obligations and there can be no true religion where the basis of civil obligations is treated as purely secular. Religion must not be regarded as an individual's personal affair, simply as a private fad, like having a hot water bottle in bed, a legitimate idiosyncrasy : but must be recognized as a vital force which has important consequences for a man's neighbours. The secular organization of the community in the State cannot be regarded as self-sufficient and no wise secular government can hope for the permanence of its institutions by adopting an attitude of indifference to religious truths, even if it be driven to adopt an attitude of impartiality between a number of different, but basically similar, creeds. The necessity of religion in a secular society is demonstrated by three independent propositions :

First : Religion, that is the recognition of the spiritual brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, is the sole philosophical justification for any sort of morality between man and man.

Second : Religion provides the moral basis of culture, without which man is unable to live at peace with his neighbour.

Third : Religion is the great governing wheel on the engine of human passion without which no passion, no love, no moral or political principle is valid or even legitimate.

It has to be realized that religion and secular life, originally united in the nation, remain united in the institution of the family, the foundation alike of the secular and religious life. It is the business of the State to foster and support family life, but the core and centre of family life is its religious consciousness.

The history of the past two generations affords ample proof of what is here urged. There is, for every careful and unbiassed analytic mind, a close connection between the two main movements of thought and practice during this period : first, the movement of human thought all over the world towards a materialistic or positive view of the universe and away from a religious or even idealistic philosophy ; second the real and very obvious retrogression from the humanism of the nineteenth century towards the abominations, the cruelties, and inhumanities of the present age. There can be no doubt that of the various political revolutions which have taken place since the turn of the century the majority have been anti-religious and that in the democracies where the same forces are at work in a free society the movement has taken the form of the worship of Mammon and Venus ; in the dictatorships, that of Moloch or of Mars. In the unthinking multitude these movements have succeeded to the extent of creating indifference ; in organized minorities they have actually produced active hostility to religion and all that is spiritual.

These then are two of the characteristics of our time : a retrogression from humanity and a conscious abandonment of religion. Therefore, our political faith has to be linked to the ultimate view of reality, and not

divorced from it. There is no hope for the world unless men can come to regard themselves as members of a common brotherhood. But the brotherhood of man is philosophically meaningless and practically unattainable except in the light of the universal fatherhood of God. To talk of a brotherhood transcending the bonds of physical fraternal relationship presupposes a kind of manhood inconsistent with materialistic philosophy. The denial of the fatherhood of God is the root from which spring quite naturally the heresies which have affected mankind in our time, the doctrine of race and of class, the worship of the State, the philosophy of dialectical materialism, or the more pragmatic and not less popular creeds of get-rich-quick or all-is-fair-in-love-and-war. Our duty towards our neighbours, outside the bounds of enlightened self-interest, begins at the moment when we realize the utter worthlessness of self in the sight of the Father of us all. Neither of the two commandments can be practised separately, for the love of God does not exist in the man who does not love his brother and the love of man is impossible except in the grace and understanding bestowed by faith in and love of God.

It is a foreshadowing of the Divine Will that the human mind in general is at present orientated in the right direction. Everyone is talking of 'One World' and the brotherhood of man. For India, the ancient home of

spirituality, where was born Advaita, where were revealed the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, now is the time to give effect to its pristine faith. Signs are not wanting that in some quarters stress is being laid upon a beginning to be made, e.g. in the insistence upon making the study of Sanskrit compulsory. The Government should accept this idea and relate it to the suggestion already made, namely, the constitution of a body of carefully selected men from enlightened spiritual organizations to frame a comprehensive programme which will have for its object the inculcation, by stages, of the grand Truths of essential Religion like God is Truth, Service is Dharma, and how all ethical injunctions follow from the performance of one's duty. This theme is capable of detailed enlargement and the writer's hope is that it will be taken up, pursued and elaborated by earnest and keen men, much better qualified for the task than he is.

What, however, seems essential at the present stage is that having, through its constitution, assured the citizens of India equality of rights in every conceivable respect, our Government should adopt the policy of providing them with a catholic religious background, so that a strong and united Indian society can be built up on a basis of moral integrity and spiritual unity.

KAILASH NARAYAN HAKSAR

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EMERSON: A CONSPECTUS—VOL. I. COMPILED BY MADHAVA RAMA. Published by C. V. Krishna Bros., Trivandrum. Pp. 549.

Emerson needs no introduction to the literary world. Inheriting all that is best in Western culture he was at the same time deeply influenced by Oriental, especially Indian, thought, into which he showed a keen insight. As a result of this confluence there flowed forth from him a new stream of ideas at once deep, liberal, and broad. He is one of the few pioneers, who, along with Thoreau and others, interpreted early in the nineteenth

century Eastern thought to the West and brought about a ferment in its ideas. He adopted as his motto *Ex Oriente Lux*—Light from the East. He did much to bring the East and the West closer.

Though Emerson is not regarded as a philosopher in the formal sense of the term, his whole outlook was philosophic. To quote from the able introduction to the book by Charles Albert Hanger, Jr., 'His preoccupation was to see life as a whole, and in its universal setting.' He impressed his personality on whatever passed through him: 'Without the disadvantages so often associated

with religious or philosophical eclecticism. Emerson's genial spirit found itself equally at home in Socrates, in Gotama Buddha, in Jesus, in the *Koran* or in the *Upanishads*; for the Sage of Concord in spiritual matters was self-reliant, and a lamp unto himself. ... Social institutions, and the policy of nations, were to be judged, in his view, on the basis of how far they fostered or hindered the unfolding of the high destiny he believed possible for man. ... The flowering of the best talents everywhere, and in all their variety; happiness in the Good Life for all men, was what he called for. Mutual respect, good will, and tolerance, being sets of conditions favouring the realization of this goal. ... His appeal is always to the positive element in us, to the Higher Self, which, in the last analysis of Emerson's thought, is the Self of God working in the world.'

There is no wonder that such a personality should inspire people all over the world. The author has drunk deep at the fountain of Emerson for over forty years. The entire work, of which this is the first volume and which will be complete in four parts, aims to arrange topically all the various writings of Emerson, with biographical, critical, and other data concerning him. The book is the result of several years of study and labour and presents Emerson under interesting heads. It will be of value to the students of Emerson as it brings together his essential thought in a compact manner as also extracts from other works on Emerson, to all of which references have been given in the footnotes.

**INDIAN CAVALCADE.** By BHARANI BHATTACHARYA. *Nalanda Publications, Post Box No. 1353, Bombay.* Pp. 261. Price Rs. 6/12.

*Indian Cavalcade* is a collection of historical sketches contributed by the author from time to time to several periodicals in India. He has selected certain prominent personalities and events of history as his themes and cast them in the form of a number of short stories without deviating from facts. He bases his accounts upon authentic works, and, where there are different versions of the same incident, he mentions them all and tries to be impartial. He is unprejudiced in his selection and objective in his portrayal.

The subjects are not confined to kings and emperors and 'historical' events alone, but embrace accounts of social and religious leaders, and thus the author falls in line with the modern conception of history which takes into account all movements which affect and mould the life and culture of a people—political, economic, social and cultural. In these sketches the author brings into play his abilities as a first-rate story-writer. Though this is no book on history, it will certainly acquaint the general reader with some of the important men and events of the past in India from the time of Vikramaditya

to the present day, though, as the author writes, 'some essential link in the material had to be left out on copyright grounds, so that there are odd blanks in the panoramic picture.'

The book makes very interesting reading, though at times one feels that there is an abrupt passing over of an event. The book will provide light stimulating reading to the public.

**INTRODUCING INDIA—PART I.** JOINT EDITORS —K. N. BAGCHI AND W. G. GRIFFITHS. *Published by The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.* Pp. 171.

This book is a collection of sixteen lectures delivered under the auspices of the Society by a number of eminent scholars, Indian and European, for the benefit of the foreign soldiers who came to India during the last war. The lectures deal with several aspects of Indian life and culture. They include, among others, *Temples of India* by Sir Norman Edgley, *The Gods and Goddesses of India* by J. N. Bannerjee, *Dawn of Law in Ancient India* by R. B. Pal, *The People of India* by W.G. Griffiths, *Art in Gandhara* by E. Dickinson, *Travels of Marco Polo* by L.R. Fawcett, *Bengal as Ch'ie Found It* by R. C. Majumdar, *Hill Tribes of Assam* by C.S. Mullan, and *Impact of War Upon the Industries of India* by G.W. Tyson.

The book contains several illustrations and maps which add to its usefulness.

The Society has done a good service to the country by publishing these lectures embodying latest researches in the subjects dealt with. They will certainly be helpful in 'introducing India' to a wider public. We hope the next Part will come out soon.

### MARATHI

**HRIDAYA BOL.** By NIVEDITA R. VINCE. *Published by Ramachandra Vincent, 'Devotion' Writer Street, Dharwar.* Pp. 98. Price Re. 1/8.

*Hridaya Bol* is a collection of songs composed by the authoress. The songs express many good ideas and noble sentiments. As such they have an educative value. The language is simple and expressive.

**VIJIANARI AUG.** By RAMESH MANTRI. *Published by R. R. Mantri, 1285, Mangalwar, Kolhapur.* Pp. 88. Price Re. 1/8.

This is a book of short sketches on the various circumstances in life that we come across. It is a candid reflection on the thoughts, ideals, and aspirations that we cherish in the start of life, and on what becomes of them as we advance in age, and also about things happening around us. The author is very critical and somewhat pessimistic, but very sincere, clear, and forceful.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE EIGHTYSEVENTH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FUNCTION AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION LIBRARY, PURI

The eighty-seventh Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Library, Puri, from the 21st to 24th of January last in accordance with a grand programme. It commenced on the 21st morning with *chandipath, homa*, and prayers etc. and was terminated with Daridra-Narayana Seva in the evening. The splendid contributions of the local Maths towards this function were notable. With the worshipping of Lord Mahabir and Ramnama Sankirtan, the programme of the 22nd began. An elocution competition was held among the college students on 'The Life of Swamiji.' Shri Satkari Hota of Puri College (3rd Year student) got the first prize. On the 23rd there was a sports competition among school boys and girls, in which about 200 competitors from 9 different schools participated. Shrimati P. K. Das, wife of the District Magistrate, distributed the prizes among the successful competitors. On the 24th morning, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Orissa, Shri H. K. Mahatab, laid the foundation stone of the proposed extension of this Library. The report of the library showed that it contained about 6000 books and on an average about a hundred people used the Library daily. The Reading Room section received 58 periodicals.

A public meeting was held under the presidency of the Hon'ble Minister that evening to pay homage to Swami Vivekananda. More than a thousand people assembled in the adjoining premises of the Library. Principal Gijra Sankar Roy, Prof. Dharma Rao, Mr. Sukanta Rao, Pt. Basudev Mishra and Shri Lokanath Misra, M.L.C., delivered lectures on the Life and Work of Swami Vivekananda. The President, in his speech mentioned the influence of Swamiji on his own life and said that all the Congress workers were, more or less, influenced by the principles and ideals of Swami Vivekananda. With a vote of thanks by Rai Bahadur Umacharan Das the meeting concluded.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA AND RAMAKRISHNA MATH, CONTAI, WEST BENGAL

REPORT FOR 1941 TO 1947

The Sevashrama was started in 1913 in pursuance of the ideal of service laid down by the great Swami Vivekananda. The following is a report of its activities from 1941 to 1947.

The activities fall mainly under three heads: (1) Preaching, (2) Educational, and (3) Service of the poor.

(1) *Preaching*: During the period under review the members of the Sevashrama conducted classes, gave

lectures and magic-lantern talks on various religious and cultural topics and on hygiene in different parts of the sub-division. Altogether there were 100 lectures and 548 classes during the period, which were well-attended.

#### (2) *Educational*:

(a) *Students' Homes*: Two Students' Homes were conducted by the Sevashrama to provide the necessary atmosphere for developing character, one in the compound of the Ashrama and the other in the Vidyalaya at Manasadwip. There were 11 students in the former, of whom 5 were free, 5 half-free and 1 paying; and 3 in the latter, all paying.

(b) *Library & Reading Room*: The Ashrama conducts a free Library & Reading Room for the public. It had 1815 books in 1947 and was receiving 9 monthly magazines and one daily paper. During the period under review 11460 books were issued.

(c) *Vidyalaya*: The Sevashrama has been conducting one High School, two Upper Primary Schools—one for boys and one for girls—in Manasadwip, a border island of Sundarbans in the 24 Parganas. It has also been conducting two Upper-Primary Schools for boys and girls in Belda village 4 miles north of Contai town. The strength in these 5 schools during 1947 was 117, 98, 36, 67 and 49 respectively. The schools have developed by stages in response to the growing needs of the people. The financial condition of the schools is not sound, and hence they need the generous help from the public for proper development.

#### (3) *Service of the Poor*:

(a) *Free Dispensary*: The dispensary is a great help even to the people of distant localities. During the period under review 18088 cases were treated, and quinine was distributed to 3143 cases.

(b) *Relief Work*: With Contai as headquarters 3 centres were opened at Khejuri, Haludvadi, and Majhichak to afford relief to the sufferers in the cyclone of 1942. Four groups were accommodated in the Ashrama buildings, and were supplied with provisions. The workers of the Sevashrama with the help of the boys of the Students' Home constructed many huts and cleared and purified the waters of nearly 2000 ponds.

*Ramakrishna Math*: The Math celebrated the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other religious prophets. Talks, lectures and music were held on the occasions. The boys of the local schools and colleges also took part. Every year about 2000 poor people were fed on the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Sevashrama requires funds for repair of the kitchen and other buildings that suffered in the cyclone of 1942 and also for putting up buildings for office and

living quarters of workers. It also requires funds to extend its activities and to provide facilities in the Students' Homes for college and other students, many of whom are seeking admission into them. It appeals to the generous public to contribute liberally to enable the Sevashrama to carry on its work of service of humanity. Any contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Cuttai, District Medinipur, West Bengal.

## RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE OF SEATTLE, U.S.A.

### REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 1947—SEPTEMBER 1948

The year has been one of considerable progress with an appreciable increase in membership and attendance on Sundays, which is a clear indication of the bright future ahead of us.

During the year under review a lot of improvements have been made on the house. The entire third floor, including the bathroom, has been repainted and redecorated. This floor will now provide rooms for at least three prospective monks who would like to live a life of renunciation and dedication. The most important work done during the past fiscal year was the renovation of the basement recreation room. A new red cement floor has been put in, the walls and ceiling have been papered and the woodwork painted. It has been furnished with a beautiful rug, floor lamps and pictures of the Holy Ones and views of Indian temples, as well as an altar, making it an ideal place for meditation and worship.

As usual, Swami Vividishananda gave a public lecture every Sunday morning, discussing the theory and practice of Vedanta, and he conducted study classes every Tuesday and Friday evening. On Tuesdays he took up the study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and on Fridays dictated classes followed by discussion on Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*. The Tuesday classes were open to the public, but the Friday classes were held for members and students.

The usual celebrations were held throughout the year, the important ones being the worship of the Divine Mother Durga and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Lord Buddha, as well as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. On Sri Ramakrishna's birthday the basement recreation room was dedicated to Swami Brahmananda and a statue of the Swami was installed. Swami Devatmananda of Portland came for the Ramakrishna

birthday celebration, and he spoke one Sunday on Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings. He also spoke at the special dinner held in connection with the celebration. Dr. Helling, Minister of the Truth Center, Tacoma, Washington, also was a guest speaker at this dinner. In connection with the Buddha celebration we had a special dinner and Swami Vividishananda and Dr. Helling were the speakers.

During the past year the Swami was invited to speak before different groups. He spoke twice at the Truth Center in Tacoma, Washington, the subjects of his lectures being 'Truth is One' and 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Dr. Helling, who invited the Swami to speak at the Truth Center, has been deeply interested in Indian philosophy and religion for many years. In fact, he had the privilege of meeting Swami Vivekananda in Detroit as a little boy, when Swamiji was a guest of his parents. Dr. Helling has many times expressed great admiration for Swami Vivekananda and his teachings.

The following is a letter written by the Secretary of the Junto Study Group in appreciation of the talk the Swami gave before their members:

'I wish to convey to you once again the thanks of the members of the Junto Study Group, their husbands, friends, and myself for the memorable experience you afforded us by coming to our last meeting. The ideas you brought us have stimulated our thinking to a wider appreciation of religions other than our own and especially to the beauty and wisdom of your faith. We feel it a great honour to have made your acquaintance and we were happy to meet the guests who accompanied you.'

During the year a group of boys and girls interested in the study of Comparative Religion and human relations attended our services. The following is a letter of appreciation from the Chairman of the group:

'Our visit to your church made the perfect finish for our study program on human relations, and on behalf of the group who made the trip I would like to thank you for your hospitality. We all need to be introduced to experiences which may be different from our own. I feel that the experience was quite valuable to us all, and that our horizons have been considerably broadened. Thank you again for your valuable contribution to our program.'

During the year, in addition to Swami Devatmananda we had three other visiting Swamis: Swami Yatiswarananda of Philadelphia, Swami Akhilananda of Boston and Swami Ghanananda of India. All of them gave inspiring talks before large audiences.

Secretary

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

JUNE 1949

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No. 6



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

‘Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.’

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Belur Math 1931

One day Mahapurush Maharsi spoke as follows on the rule of the *sadhu* :

A *sadhu* should rise very early from his bed. He must not sleep after 3 or 4 o'clock in the small hours of the morning. Why should a *sadhu* sleep after that hour ? We never saw the Master sleep after 3 o'clock ; he used to repeat God's name then. A *sadhu* should bathe early, and then meditate or do other spiritual practices. He must not eat immediately after bath. To take food immediately after bath without doing spiritual practices is not right for a *sadhu*. Others may do so, but why should a *sadhu* do that ? Everything of a *sadhu*, his appearance, speech, conduct etc. should be different—simple, charming and god-like. Why should a *sadhu* have money ? He must have absolute reliance on God. The Master is there ; He will look after everything. A *sadhu* should be neat and clean, but must not for that reason be given to luxury. Luxury is not good for those who have chosen the path of renunciation. A *sadhu* must not eat much in the night. The Master used to say that

the night meal should be like a light repast. A *sadhu* must not be ignorant, but should study. He must keep good health. He should be sweet in his words, calm and steady, and polite in his manners. A *sadhu* should always keep away from women and money. He must have no dealings with them.

Friday, 4 March 1932

Mahapurushji is not always able, due to sickness, to read his letters. An attendant is reading them to him ; he is listening very attentively. A devotee has written to him a desolate letter expressing great agony of heart : ‘The heart is full of utter disquiet. I am carrying on my spiritual practices as much as I can ; but they don't bring me peace. Do kindly tell me what will bring peace to my heart, and how I can have His mercy and find Him. I firmly believe that if only I can have your grace I shall have the grace of God and that this human life of mine will be blessed’. ... Listening to all this, Mahapurushji said. Ah ! Such men are *artas*, afflicted souls. They will have it. There is a way—faith.



If he can have enough faith that the Master is the Incarnation of the age and God Himself, and that a child of His and no other, has bestowed his grace on him, he will have everything. It is necessary to have full faith in His descent. It is He who, seated as the *guru* in my heart, is bestowing mercy on the devotees. Write to him, "Weep, weep much, my child. I know of no other way than weeping. Cry as much as you can saying, 'O Lord, have mercy on me and reveal yourself to me.' The more you cry for Him, the more He will be reflected in your heart. Cry with great love and yearning. We have heard from the Master the following song :

"O Lord, the day has drawn to its end, the twilight is come, ferry me across.

Having come to know that You are the Ferryman, I call on You.

I hear that You ferry him across who has no coins ;

I am a poor beggar without coins, so I call on You in desolation of heart," etc.

'He is the Ferryman. If He does not ferry one across this ocean of worldliness, is it ever possible for an individual to cross over to the other shore ? O Master ! You are so vast, so profound—who can understand You ? None can put a limit to You. Have mercy. Do be merciful and reveal a little of Your nature to the understanding. That will destroy one's bondage of the world for ever.'

Another devotee has written expressing his desire to know about the piercing of the six centres (arranged along the spinal column and standing for the six levels of consciousness). Mahapurushji said, 'Write to him saying that it is not necessary to know all these. Only cry to Him and cry as much as possible. Cry like a simple child and pray, "O Mother, give me love and faith ; O Mother, protect me. Liberate me from this. Your noose of *maya*." I know only this. Cry repeatedly calling on the Mother. Resign yourself to Her with a simple faith and weep. She is sure to bestow Her mercy on you. I am also praying as much as I can. May you

quickly advance and go very far in your spiritual practices.' Then looking at the attendant he said, 'Were you saying that he had some lapses and troubles ? I don't know all these. I don't care to know what one has or hasn't done in the past. What has gone is gone. Now he has managed to come here and has taken refuge in the Master. Everything will be all right, he will be saved. The master can reverse the decree of Fate (*karma*). He has taken refuge in the Incarnation of the age. Is it a slight thing ? It could'nt have come about without his having done many good deeds. He will surely save him.' ....

Shortly after this a devotee saluted Mahapurush Maharaj offering the latter some money for his personal needs. Mahapurushji said to the devotee : 'Why did you offer money at the time of saluting ? I have no need of money. We are *sadhus*, what shall I do with money ? I have no want thanks to the grace the Master. I am the servant of the Master. He is giving 'two *rotis*' out of His mercy.' So saying he began to sing :

'O Lord, I am a servant, I am a servant, I am a servant of Yours.

You are the Master, You are the Master.

You are the Master of mine.

I have got two *rotis* and a piece of loin cloth from You

Please give me love and devotion and make me sing Your name, I am a servant of Yours.

He is already giving two *rotis* out of His mercy, what shall I do with money and wealth ? Take that away, my child. You are householders ; it is you who need money.' But as the devotee insisted on its acceptance in earnest humility, Mahapurushji asked the attendant to give the money for the Master's worship. ....

Reading of letters began again. A devotee who was initiated had committed many reprehensible acts before initiation. He became very repentant for all these, and confessing many things of his past life he has written asking for His pardon. Listening to the

letter Mahapurushji became serious for some time. Later on he said : 'He is truly repentant at heart. It is these people who will have mercy. Write to him : 'You have no fear, the Master will save you. No sin whatever is great in His eye. The Master came exactly because He wanted to save you. He is the Inner Ruler : He has bestowed His grace on you after full knowledge about your past, present, and future. Be resigned to Him in word, thought, and deed. He has taken hold of your hand from now on. He will not allow you to take any more wrong step. There is no fear, my child. Go on calling on Him yearningly. He will save you. And all your sins have been washed away by the fact that you have confessed all your evil deeds to me. You are from now on sinless, His devotee, who has taken refuge in, and has been sheltered, by Him. Pray for purity, devotion, and love alone from Him.'

Afterwards on the subject of love and the lover of God Mahapurushji said, 'The Master used to say, "It is an extremely rare thing. Ordinary persons do not usually have pure love." The Master used to sing with great feeling :

"I do not grudge granting Liberation, but  
I grudge giving pure devotion

He who achieves devotion to Me—he conquers the universe and receives service from all.

Listen O Chandravali, I shall speak to you about *bhakti*, devotion ;

Pure devotion is to be found only at Brindavan ; it is not known to anybody else except the cowherds and milkmaids.

It is due to devotion that I am in the house of Nanda and carry his burden on My head, like a son unto him."

'Aha ! with what feeling the Master used to sing this song.' So saying he began to sing the song himself. Afterwards remaining quiet for a while he began to say as it were to himself : 'The Master came for the redemption of the sinful and the afflicted. If one takes refuge in Him in all sincerity, He wipes

away all sins by gently passing His hand of mercy over him. At His divine touch man immediately becomes sinless. What is necessary is sincere longing for Him, and self-dedication at His feet. Girish Babu had committed so many follies. But noticing his devotion the Master bestowed His mercy on Him and took him up into His bosom. So Girish Babu used to say at the end of his life : "If I only knew of the existence of such a deep pit into which I could throw all my sins, I would have committed many more." He is Mercy incarnate, an ocean of mercy.'

A certain woman devotee, recently bereaved of her husband, has written a desolate letter lamenting like one gone crazy. Listening to the letter in deep silence, Mahapurushji now and then exclaimed, 'Ah ! I can't hear it anymore.' After the letter had been read, he kept his eyes shut for a while and said, 'The Mother plays, while men and women suffer bereavement and misery. Who will understand all this ? If man gives a little thought to all this and reflects on the impermanence of the world, then alone can he be saved. Men are immersed in *maya* day and night. It is good to think of death now and then. There is no end to the way in which the transitoriness of the world presents itself before all eyes. Still man does not awaken to the truth. This is *maya*. The Master used to sing this song often before the devotees.' So saying he began to sing in a trembling voice, in desolation of heart as it were :

'Such is the *maya* of the Great Mother, what a spell She has cast over all !

Brahma and Vishnu are unaware of it, can mere man know ?

Digging a hollow the fisherman places a trap into which fish enter.

The way into and out of it is always open, still the fish can never get out.

The larva forms a cocoon round it though it can escape if it chooses.

The cocoon of Mahamaya binds the larva, which dies in the snare of its own making !

Man is exactly like the larva. Himself creating a world of illusion he has become bound by it and dies of the agony of bereavement and suffering. He will never realize that no one of those he is ever thinking as his own is really his. For one thing, it is such a dreadful experience to be bound by a body; and on top of this there is the creation of this *maya*. But what can man do? He suffers being deluded by the concealing power of Mahamaya. It is the play of her destructive power. Therefore the Master used to say, 'Mother, who can understand Your play? I don't want to know. Be merciful, and give me pure love for Your lotus feet and pure

knowledge—This is my prayer.' The Master used to say this many a time. I am just repeating his words. When the Master fell down and broke his arm, his condition was like that of a child. One day He was walking slowly like a small child and saying to the Mother, "O Mother, You never had to be born in a body. You have never felt the pain of embodiment!"

Mahapurushji kept quiet for a while and said, 'Ah! Freshly bereaved of husband!' As he said these he burst into tears. Afterwards he closed his eyes and sat absorbed in meditation.

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (V)

BY THE EDITOR

India's contact with the outside world was close, even long before the birth of Buddhism. It was established by means of the great ancient trade-routes (one very well-known of these ran from the prosperous cities on the lower Ganges via Taxila and the north-west to the marts of central Asia and beyond) and later by the expansion of the Persian political power. Ideas travelled along these routes and the imperial means of communication to the distant areas of civilization. Civilized communities, even at their early dawn, particularly those which lay along the fringes of the great land mass situated centrally to the old world of Asia, Europe, and Africa, were not so isolated then as we are apt to assume today. A constant stream of people, some times a trickle and not unoften a tide, moved across this land mass of Central Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor from all points around it. Brisk maritime trade also connected India with Babylon, Assyria, and the Mediterranean countries. Apart from

trade there were other impulses and factors, pressure of population, search for fresh lands and pasture, the desire for adventure and knowledge and so on, which led to these constant and wide movements. Knowledge and ideas spread along these tracks from one corner to another. This vast area, the hub of the ancient world and alive with movement, presented a field where ideas and ways of life met and clashed and were tested out. A process of natural selection in the realm of ideas weeded out what fell short of worth for the further progress of mankind.

Long before Alexander Indians had been to Greece and the Greeks to India. Indian traders and philosophers walked in the streets of Athens in the days of Socrates and Plato. Indian soldiers fought in the ranks of Darius probably, and of Xerxes certainly, against Greece. Records point to still earlier contacts. Persia, in antiquity, served as the middle term between India and Greece. Enough material is now available to connect Indian thought with Ionian speculations—

which form the starting-point of Greek philosophy and science and literature. Greek accounts link up Pythagoreanism with India. The substance of Platonism is according to many Pythagorean. Apart from it Socrates and Plato have been directly connected with India. Reading the history of Western philosophy one has the impression that Socrates and Plato have generally been misunderstood in the West, because the real drift and scope of their dialectics have been missed. Platonic dialectics do not aim at *proving* what lies beyond proof, but to reveal the self-stultifying character of Protagorean relativism and scepticism and also to *point* to the universal factors in our knowledge. Our knowledge is a blend of the true and the false, the universal and the particular. While the senses give us particulars, the raw material of our experience, they do not give us universals, without assuming which no science or conduct is ever possible. Our conceptions of truth, justice, and beauty take for granted timeless principles. Rational life is not possible without them. The universal, of which no *certain* knowledge can be had through the senses or reasoning, can be known immediately by intellectual intuition (*buddhigrahya*), whose meaning is not generally clear to the modern interpreters of Plato. It is for this reason that a fantastic notion about Platonic universals, like a series of concrete realities alongside of the particulars of sense, has been entertained by a long line of writers. Platonic statements become clear by being viewed in the Indian context. Plato is a rare synthesis of Indian depth and Greek form.

Indian faiths and philosophies flourished in Asia Minor in pre-Christian times. Krishna worship was prevalent in Armenia at least in the second and third centuries B. C. Temples dedicated to Krishna and containing big images of the deity were set up near the lake Van. These were later on destroyed by the early Christians. In fact Indian religions were dominant in Western Asia till

quite recent times, namely, the rise and spread of Islam.

The Syrian countries which formed part, first of the Persian and later of the Graeco-Roman world for nearly five centuries before the Christian era, were long exposed to Indian influence. They had intimate contact in particular with the Bhagavata religion and Buddhism. There is little doubt that Christianity owes its origin to the impact of India upon Israel. This is probably one reason why Judaism became hostile, and has remained so ever afterwards, to the new faith as something outlandish.

Islam similarly arose on a soil permeated by these different influences. The Arabs took out of them the elements which answered to their needs and formulated a faith which gave a new dynamic impulse to the people. Its chief strength was derived from its militant monotheism and its rare freedom from race-consciousness. The spiritual language just suited the people and was adequate to circumvent the conflicts of race and blood. Its militant creed provided a superior outlet for their fighting impulses. Its essentially simple and strong commonsense approach to the spiritual problem came later on as a serious challenge to ancient faiths which had gathered round its pure and original core fantastic accretions as time went and which often spoke in terms too lofty for the common understanding. Islam certainly put across spiritual truths, directly and simply, to large masses of men.

The silent and deep penetration of Indian ideas into the remotest fields of civilization remains yet to be fully explored and told. Still, when we remember that Ionian speculation went from Asia Minor to Greece and Magna Græcia to form the basis of the later brilliant superstructure of Greek thought and culture, and further when we realize that the Roman civilization was only a continuation of the Greek and that the Western culture is derived from the Graeco-Roman and Christian sources, and when to all these we add that Indian ideas went beyond

mountains and across seas in the north and the east to China and Tibet, to Burma, Malay, and the Indonesian islands, creating conditions everywhere for the rise of new civilizations, we can form some idea of Indian contribution to humanity.

In India the broad teachings of the new faiths that arose in answer to the changing needs created a wide field of unity among a complex people. This unity gradually found a political expression and set up before ambitious rulers the ideal of a universal monarchy. Though the ideal generally lay beyond the range of their achievement it was constantly present before the minds of religious thinkers and political philosophers. The name *Bharatavarsha* which came to be applied to India as a whole in the Epics and the *Puranas* represents this aspiration. The *Vishnu Purana* has the following remarkable verse :

*Uttaram yat samudrasya Himadreshchaiva  
dakshinam  
Varsham tad Bharatam nama Bharati  
yatra santati*

'The country which lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bharata, for there dwell the descendants of Bharata.'

It is instructive to remember that this national idea arose in India long before the present nations of the West started life and history.

The first big political translation of this national sense is seen in the rise of the Magadhan power which, shortly after Alexander's death, extended its domain over nearly the whole of India and flung back across the Hindukush the Greek adventurers on the Indian soil. Mauryan political inspiration is derived from traditional sources : it was only later on, after the State had been firmly established, that the entire machinery of administration was turned over to the propagation of Buddhism. The dynamic impulse which moved the people to heroic action and immortal achievements came from

spiritual sources. Asoka's State was universal in character, though his leaning towards Buddhism became very marked towards the end of his rule. He preached moral and spiritual precepts common to all the religions. To the people in general his edicts preach a simple morality that will win for them happiness in heaven. The amazing achievements of the Mauryan times in material and moral planes reflect the Titanic fire which possessed the people. Their depths had been stirred by great ideals from which all immortal creations arise.

It is necessary to pause here for a moment, for the Asokan period contains more than one lesson for us. It is not without reason that this period holds our imagination and casts a spell over us. It is, however, necessary to look at the whole picture, and not merely at certain parts of it. What usually catches our eye are the bright lights and not the dark shadows. Asokan politics, in its idealism, went beyond its range. Politics cannot take over the functions of moral and spiritual orders. Its business is different and is mainly concerned with the play of forces in and outside society. It is true, force is no solution for force. But neither is an appeal to the pure spiritual principle enough to eliminate our savage impulses. Some kind of sanction in society will be necessary for a long time to come. It is, of course, right and necessary that politics should look beyond itself for the ends it will pursue, for like everything else in this world it belongs in the realm of means. But it cannot eschew force and follow the extreme morality which can only suit particular individuals. Politics and spirituality do not mix well. Asoka made an extreme experiment which has cost us much. His political officers became spiritual missionaries (*dharma mahamatras*). The turbulent tribes along the frontiers of the Empire, in the northwestern parts in particular, were left to the tender care of the preachers of morality. It is not difficult to foresee the results of politics that speaks a high moral language but has not got the strength to use force, when

no other way is left, to secure its moral aim. The vast empire so elaborately organized and commanding almost limitless resources in men, money, and technique vanished swiftly, almost like a dream, after Asoka's death. While the battalions of Seleucus, who had inherited the Asiatic dominions of Alexander, were defeated by Chandragupta Maurya even before the Maurya power rose to its height, the full resources of the same, at the plenitude of its power, failed to protect the country against the depredations of petty Greek princelings of Bactria. A palsy had struck the elephant of the State machinery, so that a mosquito sting brought it to a collapse.

A brahmanical revival marked by the flaring up of the *Gita* religion and repeated performance of the horse-sacrifice followed shortly after and put an end to the shrunken Maurya rule in Magadha, but not before the empire had fallen in ruins and foreigners had planted themselves in the Northwest. It was centuries before anything like the Mauryan political structure could be constructed again. Nothing exactly like it ever reappeared in pre-British India. If the Northwestern marches could have been held firm against incursions for another two centuries, the whole subsequent history of India might have been very different from what we know. As it is, a great opportunity for social progress and steady political evolution was lost for ages.

Mauryan politics struck a mortal blow at the brilliant and incomparable kshatriya tradition of India. Consider the epic heroes of India. There was nothing like them elsewhere in fact or fiction. King Arthur and Sir Galahead, who may be said to have had some sort of epic semblance, fall far short of the clear and high spiritual conception of the Aryan fighter; they are a lone and faint echo of it, which again faded away as quickly as it rose. In medieval times some flashes of it occur in India now and then, but these cases are rare and record a great decline. In later ages circumstances condemned the descendants of the mighty heroes to brigandage,

when no healthy outlet was left for heroic self-expression. Chinese and other travellers from the fifth to the eighth and ninth centuries tell us of an India, the *madhyadesha* in particular, which enjoyed peace and security. Roads were free for travel and without danger from brigands. But from the advent of the Muslim rule in the north down to British days the conditions change. The country becomes full of brigands and the roads grow unsafe. It is not difficult to see that the kshatriya power which had been broken up, more by our own faults than anything else, turned to these channels of expression in absence of healthier ones. Virtue is not learnt by suppression.

The substance of Indian history from the fall of the Mauryas down to the time of the Guptas is formed by foreign incursions and the attempts on the part of indigenous rulers for checking these as well as for restoring the fallen fabric of Mauryan imperialism. The new political attempts are heralded by a fresh and broad dynamic spiritual revival, the full harvest of which was reaped only during the Gupta period. The spiritual movements are generally the less obvious part of Indian history, though in fact they are the more fundamental and important. The fresh revival put a new heart into the people and gave a vigorous impulse to the quiet process of assimilation of foreign peoples and races into the Indian society. Pure spirituality is preached in simple and picturesque terms; it is mixed with a strong dose of common sense and fancy for the masses in general. Myths and images and other concrete helps are widely employed. There is an appeal to emotion and the will, a repudiation of the negative form of self sacrifice and an emphasis on self-expression. This is preeminently the age of the *Puranas*. They achieve their aim of social cohesion on a spiritual basis.

A few significant and broad facts relating to the above may be mentioned. This is the time when the Mahayana form of Buddhism, to which we have referred earlier, sprang into

life. It built up a new emotional religion with concrete images and a new literature, especially under the influence of the *Gita dharma*. All these enabled it to bring into the Indian fold large masses of foreigners, Greeks and Parthians, Sakas and Kushans and so on. But the greatest headway was made first by Vaishnavism and, subsequently, by Shaivism. This period is preeminently the period of the *Gita* and the Bhagavata religion, which take account of all the past and present factors and build up a balanced view of life and spirituality. It is no wonder that Krishna worship flares up after negative Buddhism had failed the nation. It is significant that the dynasties which sought to retrieve the political disasters of the Maurya rule, namely, the Sungas, the Kanvas, and the Satavahanas, were all of brhmanical origin, and that most of the rulers were ardent worshippers of Krishna. They announce their rise to political supremacy by horse-sacrifices. The brahmin, deriving inspiration from the traditional sources, took up the sword of defence after the kshatriya had dropped it, abjuring his natural function. The background of the *Gita* naturally comes to the mind. The flaring up of the *Gita dharma* had a historical context. Ignorant scholarship which fails to see the deeper tides of history that lie below politics and social movements has represented this traditional upsurge as the sign of a selfish and sectarian reaction against Buddhism. The judgment is not only puerile but also prejudiced, born as it is of a tendency to paint black all that smacks of Hinduism. No, negative Buddhism had opened the gate to social and political chaos.

The Bhagavata religion won large converts. This is testified very clearly by numerous archaeological and numismatic finds. A Greek ambassador to an Indian court in the second century B. C. raised a *garudadhvaja* column in honour of Vishnu and proclaimed himself a *bhagavata*. This is only typical. Converts were made from other races also. The Gandhara region in this period saw a

great religious upsurge. The coins of the times recently dug up also tell other tales no less interesting. When the foreigners freshly arrived in the Northwest from Central Asia, they brought with them Babylonian, Iranian, Greek, and other non-Indian deities, whose names are mentioned on the coins struck by their rulers. But these foreign deities disappear shortly after and the coins come to bear the names and images of Indian gods like Shiva and so on. The rulers themselves take up Indian or Indianized names, get merged in the Indian society, and proclaim themselves as devout worshippers of Indian deities.

Many of these foreigners also brought with them into India elements of a decadent Hellenism, particularly in the field of art. After their conversion these art forms were used to express Indian conceptions. This put a fresh inspiration into the art itself and created a new style, which later on formed the starting-point of the Far Eastern art. Though this school of the Northwest lacks the depth and sublimity and idealism of the purely Indian schools of the south, it nonetheless stands as a concrete symbol of India's response to foreign challenges and her ability to synthesize alien forms with the native spirit.

The rise of the Satavahana and Pallava powers in the South, beyond Aryavarta and wedded to vigorous Brahminism, calls for notice. When the North failed, the daughter South came, as it came often afterwards to the rescue of Indian civilization. The South has often been like a chrysalis from which the perennial Tradition has renewed itself more than once.

In the confusion and turmoil created by the incursions and the ambitions of rulers the need was felt for the consolidation of gains and compilation of ancient knowledge and codification of rules of social and personal conduct. The need for preservation was paramount; it was no ideal time for fresh advance. A kind of international structure of society based on certain common fundamental con-

ceptions was necessary for reducing clashes and preparing the way for progress. So begins the great age of compilation of all kinds of knowledge. Standard works on grammar, law, politics, and religion, come to be written down during this period. The Epics, the important *Puranas* and *Dharmashastras*, as we find them today, received their final shape at this time. They present the picture of an elaborately organized social hierarchy. The ruling classes among the foreigners and the Hinduized border tribes came to form new classes of kshatriyas, while the rank and file came under less exalted social groups.

The full fruits of the new awakening were gathered in the Gupta period which, from many points of view, is the most brilliant epoch of Indian history known to us. By all tests and from all accounts the common people were happy and prosperous; there was peace and good government in the country, roads were safe and free, charity was abundant and piety widespread. Conditions were sufficiently stable for a length of time in the central parts to enable the people to attain an amazingly high level of material and moral progress. Some of the Gupta creations in art are among the immortal products of all times. The same can be said in regard to creations in other fields also.

The Guptas, however, could not recover in full, even in their best days, the fallen power of the Mauryas. The political and social problems had become more complicated and difficult in the meantime. New factors and conflicting forces were present on the scene. The situation that faced the Mauryas was comparatively simple. Besides, many things had been irretrievably lost. In particular, the Northwestern marches lay outside the Gupta imperial power and were shortly afterwards run over by the fierce Huns, whose depredations covered a wide tract, reaching in the West to some of the fairest provinces of the declining Roman Empire. It is possible that, given a little more time, the Guptas might have gradually extended their power

over the Northwest and stabilized things for a steady and unruffled evolution of Indian history.

As it is, the Gupta power fell, due mostly to Hun incursions and the rivalries of ambitious rulers who aspired for imperial dominion. The substance of Indian history from the fall of the Guptas up to the advent of Islam is made, as in the post-Mauryan times, by foreign incursions and indigenous resistance to these. Rulers who aim at political supremacy look back to old days and make it a point to fight the Huns as a necessary qualification for political overlordship of India. The Vikramaditya tradition is continued and constant war is maintained against the invaders. The frontier question necessitates a shift of the centre of political authority from the east to the west. Magadha is too distant, Kanauj and Ujjain rise to new importance. The old process is to some extent reversed. Indian geography, till recent times, dictated that the country's political capital should be somewhere close to the Northwest. But the problem of the frontier was hardly ever grasped intelligently by the ancient rulers who generally chose the seat of government somewhere in the prosperous, rich, and fertile lower Ganges valley. When the logic of facts forced a decision to the contrary, militant Islam was already at the gate, and its tides rolled over the Indian plains before a fragmented India could once more be reunited under an indigenous ruler.

But while political authority moves west, culture retires to south and east and other secluded spots, away from the depredations of the vandals. Lights of civilizations go out one after another along the frontier. They gradually go out at other places also as vandalism sweeps on, and it was long before they began to reappear again.

Below the surface of politics, however, below all this turmoil and clash of forces, the old process of spiritual renewal and fresh assimilation of new elements continues. This movement is represented by a long line of Vaishnava, Shaiva, and other *acharyas* in the North as



well as in the South. Shaivism gains ascendancy over others, but all these are rooted in the vedic tradition. Prominent among the *acharyas* of the period were Udyotakara, Shankara, the Shaiva teachers of Kashmir, of whom the most celebrated is Abhinavagupta, the *Nayanars* and the *Vīrashaivas* in the South. Vaishnava teachers arose in great numbers in the South, among whom the most important were Yamunacharya and Ramanuja, the latter of course belonging to the twelfth century. There were *mīmāṃsaka* teachers of great repute also. All had a common foe in Buddhism in particular. But the rigid *mīmāṃsaka* school also declined along with Buddhism. The new teachers gave a fresh impulse towards national renewal and synthesis.

The Huns were gradually absorbed into the Indian society. But as we have noted above, before politics could take advantage of this spiritual renewal, a deluge was preparing in the heights of Afghanistan and beyond, which shortly after swept over India. Their work, however, was far from vain. While politics failed the nation, society and culture were preserved against the unprecedented fury and fierce onslaughts of Islam by the new strength that these preachers put into the people. The tide of Islam swirled and foamed around the rock of Indian culture for centuries but failed to submerge it, thanks to their labours. In their various *saṃpradāyas* they preserved the seed from which India sprang up again.

(To be continued)

## I SAW THE RECORDING ANGEL

BY N. BANGARAYYA

It looks as though Incarnations of God often bring their own recording angels. Valmiki accompanied Rama, and Vyasa came with Krishna. Who accompanied Ramakrishna? . . .

I can never forget the day in November 1916 when I first had placed in my hands a copy of the glorious *Gospel*. It came as a present from specially holy hands—a monk who had dedicated his life to the service of others and the quest of Truth, one who, even in this Iron Age, had lived all the four traditional *āshramas* (stages of life) in an exemplary way, and at last reached the Goal of life. His disciple, who actually brought it, was also a great lady—a life-long celibate given to austerity, pilgrimage, and *sādhana*.

But for that *Gospel*, I would have perhaps missed Ramakrishna. No doubt, there are other books—great in themselves—giving an account of Ramakrishna's life and sayings.

But the *Gospel* stands unique among the Ramakrishna literature, if not among the scriptures of the world. In it we are face to face with the Lord—no veil of interpretation standing between. Ramakrishna speaks, and we listen. How was it possible to preserve the freshness and inspiration, God alone knows. My artistic temperament would not have been attracted to Sri Ramakrishna, but for the fascinating picture in the *Gospel*. For some time, I entertained a doubt whether the English-educated disciple did not polish up and smarten the crude speech of his illiterate Master. But when I met Master Mahasiya or M (as the modest pen-name goes) I became fully convinced that it is impossible for anybody to add to the charm of Ramakrishna. M spoke beautifully; but there was a distinct and ineffaceable barrier between the two styles, the style of the Master as the disciple has recorded and the style of the disciple him-

self. The originality, suggestiveness, simplicity and directness of the former are all its own. It soars far above the reach of any human intellect, be it ever so great. It is not possible for anybody to have invented for the 'world 'The Ramakrishna Art'. It is greatness enough to have preserved it.

The *Gospel* prompted me to visit M. For this literary curiosity apart, I had an intense longing to meet the great benefactor who gave a hero after my heart. I lived in a corner of South India before I actually decided to go and meet him. I had started correspondence with him for about three or four years on questions pertaining to my *sadhana*. At my insistence and in spite of his advanced age and neuralgic pains he wrote a whole card in his own hand, blessing (praying for the Master's blessings as he put it) and encouraging me. I have kept the letter as a precious memento.

## II

On 1 August 1930, I with two companions started for Calcutta. We reached there on the 2nd and put up in a South Indian hotel in the Chittaranjan Avenue. We met M for the first time on the 3rd of August. Early in the morning we took a guide from the hotel and started to find out M's residence. Amherst street in which he was then living was very near our hotel. The roads were already wet with the rain of the previous night, and by the time we started (early morning) a slight drizzle had begun. When we reached the house of M, we were straightway directed to the third floor where M was having his residence. It was a big building in which a school was run, of which M was the Proprietor. The stairs led us to a very tiny apartment, where stood two or three rickety old chairs and a bench. The apartment, on one side, opened into a pretty spacious open terrace. On the other side there was a very big room which we later discovered to be the meditation room. When

we occupied the chairs in the apartment, there was nobody there. We had brought with us a garland of fresh jasmynes and sat meditating upon Sri Ramakrishna. It must have been about 9 A. M., quite a long time since we arrived, when the door of the meditation room suddenly opened.

There stood before us a tall and stately figure with an overflowing silvery beard. Is it a *mantra drashta* that has stepped out of the Vedas? We fell prostrate on the ground before him. He bade us rise up and take our seats. 'I shall be coming presently,' he added and went downstairs. He came back shortly after and sat on a bench opposite to us. He spoke for about an hour. There was first a dialogue between us and then an uninterrupted speech by him. The speech was replete with quotations from the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. It was at once fluent and sparkling. There was a singsong intonation in it such as is found among the Christian missionaries of our parts. If I had a mind, I could have recorded the whole speech from memory after I returned to my hotel. But at that time I did not take it into my head to record it, and now I regret it very much. When he was still going on with his speech, a lean Bengalee boy who was waiting upon him spoke to him something in Bengali. Then M turned to us apologetically, saying, 'I am sorry; recently I fell ill. My heart is weak and doctors advised me not to speak.' Upon this we said, 'We are very sorry to have troubled you. We would beseech you to follow the injunctions of the medical advisers strictly.'

This was the first day. I recorded what I thought important in the dialogue. Though the record is a little fragmentary I would like to share it with the reader. After the introductions were over I started the conversation.

I: (Pointing to one of my companions) He is suffering very much from lust. Can you give him any helpful advice?

*M* : Every man can be a pilot in a calm sea. He is an expert who can steer his ship in stormy weather. In the same way he is a real *sadhaka* who manages to remember God in spite of lust and other passions assailing his mind. There is true greatness in it.

*I* : We are far from greatness, and the suffering is too much for us.

*M* : After God realization not the slightest trace of it will be left. You will not feel embittered, because you have suffered so much. You will only laugh at all this struggle.

*I* : (Within myself) God realization ! Goodness gracious ! How far away it must be ! There was a short silence.

*M* : Have you gone to the Belur Math ? Have you paid your respects to Swami Shivananda ?

*I* : Yes.

*M* : Have you come to take initiation from him ?

*I* : For me there is a point of pride. I have made up my mind that I should not take initiation from anybody else except Sri Ramakrishna. Will my desire be fulfilled ?

*M* : What objection can there be, if there is God's grace ?

*My companion* (Sj. Narsu) : Do you advise us to take initiation from Shivananda ?

*M* : How can I give any advice in the matter ? It is for individuals to decide for themselves. It has become a fashion to take initiation and then to remain in the vortex of worldliness. What purpose is served by such an initiation ? After all, your *guru* must appeal to you and you must appeal to your *guru*.

*Narsu* : We cannot stay here for more than a week ; we have no money with us to do so.

*M* : Is God realization such a light thing as to be decided in a week ? If once you take initiation the consequences follow for lives. You must think very carefully in this matter. Have you not heard the proverb :

'Marry in haste and repent at leisure' ? So be careful. You must observe your *guru* for at least ten or fifteen days before you take initiation from him. Then if he appeals to you, you can have initiation.

*I* : Is Shivananda a realized soul ?

*M* : How can I say ? Do not depend upon my opinion. 'Lean not on a broken reed ; for man is such.' If you depend upon man you may be totally misled. Suppose I say he is a realized soul. What guarantee is there that you will have faith in it ? You must decide for yourselves. ...

*M* : Have you seen Dakshineswar—the scene where Sri Ramakrishna played his Divine drama ?

*I* : No. We have not yet been taken there.

*M* : Oh, no, no. You must not delay it. You can see the temple's pinnacle even from the Belur Math. Have you seen it ?

*I* : Yes. Every inch of the land in that temple—

*M* : Why, every particle of dust in that temple is instinet with spirituality. If you just step into that temple you will have spiritual progress.

*I* : But we may also feel the pain that Sri Ramakrishna is not physically present there.

*M* : Wherever there is pleasure there is pain also. He who transcends both is a *yogi*. Even though you cannot feel the physical presence of Sri Ramakrishna, you can try to imagine the presence of his *sat-chit-ananda* (spiritual) form there.

*I* : Can imagination give satisfaction ? We must see Him face to face. Otherwise how can the thirst be quenched ?

After this the sage who was facing us turned a little sideways and exclaimed, 'We have become known to each other ! We are all of one family. This is all due to the grace of Sri Ramakrishna. Through the grace of an Incarnation people belonging to different nations and races forget their differences and behave as though they are blood-brothers.'

When he exclaimed, 'We are all of one family,' a spring of joy welled forth from within us.

With a glow in his face he asked us, 'Have you seen our *Thakurs* (gods)? and rose up to take us into his worship room. As we were going, I said, 'You are not doing well. Otherwise I would have requested you for some reminiscences of the Master.' He turned round and exclaimed, 'All that I have spoken to you today are reminiscences of the Master. Take away the Master, the disciple is nothing!' I have already referred to a continuous speech made by M, of which unfortunately, I did not keep a record. That was a bit general and no personal incident was narrated therein. So I failed to understand how it could have come under the head of reminiscences, so I added, 'I mean personal reminiscences.' Still the sage insisted, 'They are intensely personal,' and repeated, 'Take away the Master, the disciple is nothing.' I did not like to pursue the point further.

The meditation room was very spacious. But it was not neatly kept. The floor was full of some unbound printed forms; and books lay scattered here and there. I was reminded of the Master's description of a *satvic* devotee's surroundings. On the walls were hung some pictures. But they were so very old that it was hardly possible to decipher them. Pointing to a photo he said, 'This is Vivekananda at twentythree.' We put faith in his words and took it to be a picture of Vivekananda, for, left to ourselves, we could not see much of a picture there. Similarly he pointed at other pictures, naming each. But one thing gave us very great delight. Pointing to each picture the venerable sage bowed before it, and we had the good fortune to be with him at that heavenly moment. It gave us a thrill of joy.

He next took us on to the open terrace. From there he pointed out saying, 'That is our flower garden.' On the terrace was the sacred *tulasi*, basil, plant. He fell prostrate

before it, and we followed suit.

My companion Narsu wanted to place the Jasmine garland round his neck; but as he attempted to do so the apostle gave a start as though he were shocked. He asked the young Bengalee boy standing by his side to take it and place it on the picture of Sri Ramakrishna in the worship room. As he was doing so M exclaimed in Bengali '*sugandhi*' (very fragrant). At our home for years we had been decorating the picture of Sri Ramakrishna with garlands of flowers. But when we saw the writer of the *Gospel* decorating the picture in his worship room with a garland we took with us, we counted it a unique moment in our lives.

Then we took our leave of him. Before we parted I pleaded, 'It is unfortunate that you are not doing well. We intend to come here now and then. You need not exert yourself. But please allow us to sit in your company for some time. That boon you must grant us.'

He replied, 'Please do come.'

As we were parting I wanted to say how happy we felt to have met him. But before I could finish my sentence he exclaimed, 'Speech is silver, but silence is golden. So I did not like to give expression to my joy. This meeting is a blessing to me.'

His modesty silenced us.

### III

In the evening of that very day at about seven we again repaired to that tiny apartment. It was dark and there was no lamp in it. He was meditating along with some devotees. As we entered, a devotee ran down stairs, brought a lamp and accommodated us on one of the benches. Another devotee whispered to me in broken and faulty English, 'He is prays.' The meditation continued, and we too sat meditating. After about half an hour he opened his eyes.

M: (Turning to us) Have you been to Dakshineswar?

I : No.

M : Have you been to the Belur Math again ?

I : No. Tomorrow we propose going to Dakshineswar.

M : Before you go there you should prepare yourselves for the visit.

I : Today we have been busy preparing ourselves. That is why we did not go either to the Math or to any other place.

After a short pause, he burst into what I would call an inspired utterance. It was meant to be an introduction to our pilgrimage to Dakshineswar.

M : Seeing Dakshineswar you can have an idea of what Sri Ramakrishna's surroundings were. The temple was the background of Divine scenes and incidents. At Dakshineswar you will find the *bel* tree under which the Master practised great *tantrik sadhanas*. There is also the *panchavati* where he went through many spiritual exercises. You will also see the Master's chamber. When you enter the Master's chamber you will see with your mind's eye the Master seated with his disciples and talking to them on divine subjects. We always found the Master absorbed in spiritual moods. Some times he would be in *samadhi*. Some times he would be singing and dancing. At other times he would be talking to the Divine Mother. We have seen a man who actually talked to the Divine Mother. We were fortunate enough to see a man whose experiences form as it were a living *Veda*. It is revelations from such people that we have to fall back upon and not on our 'ounce of reason'. Intellect cannot go far into spiritual matters. Intellect has been weighed and found wanting. Christ said to his disciples, 'I speak of things which I have seen with my own eyes; and yet you believe me not.' One has to put faith in the words of a man of realization. When you go to the temple you must purify yourselves and slip yourselves of all

sensuality. Only the pure in heart can see God. You must also prepare yourselves to receive wireless messages from the Master. This pilgrimage to Dakshineswar will help you a good deal towards God-realization.'

He went on talking like this, when a devotee whispered into my ears, 'Master Mahasay has recently fallen ill. So please don't allow him to go on. The doctors have warned us that there is danger if he is allowed to speak much.' Upon this I interrupted, M, saying, 'Revered Sir, you are suffering from a heart trouble. If you go on speaking like this, it will do you harm. I would request you to desist.' He at once realized the situation, and in a gentle and tender voice pleaded, 'Yes, it is true that am ill;' and stopped. He afterwards spoke something in Bengali to some one sitting by his side. A lamp was brought there from downstairs. A devotee gave us *prasad*.

I cannot describe in words the impression made on our minds that night. Each sentence of the speech was a diamond. How much he must have been absorbed in the Master may be gleaned from the fact that he forgot altogether about his illness. He risked his health for our sake, and earnestly prepared us for the unique pilgrimage of our life. I thought, within myself, 'Suppose I now go on a pilgrimage to Brindavan shall I find an Uddhava or a Vyasa to introduce me to the place? How fortunate am I!'

We knelt before him and prayed, 'Please bless us that we may be fit to enter the temple of Dakshineswar and receive the Master's wireless messages.' But it is impossible for him to slip from his exalted humility even casually. He replied quickly, 'Let us all pray for His blessings. Who am I to bless? Lean not on a broken reed, for man is such.' The repetition of the last sentence sounded like one of the epic repetitions of the *Ramayana*.

#### IV

Our third and last visit was after we had

finished our pilgrimage to Dakshineswar. It was probably on the 5th of August. The climate of Calcutta did not suit me and I fell ill. So lest we should be troubling the *sanyasins* of the *Math*, we wanted to cut short our stay there and return home.

It must have been nearly 5-30 p.m. when we reached M's apartment for the third time. It was evening and the sunset was beautiful to watch. The mellowed light of the evening sun enveloped the open terrace. Some boys and girls were flying kites and shouting merrily. Undisturbed, the sage was meditating within the room. We sat on the bench and after some time he came out and greeted us cordially. Saying that he would return shortly he went downstairs. After a short interval there came a young man of about twenty-five. He had a smiling appearance and had overflowing hair. We entered into a conversation with him.

I : Are you a son of Master Mahasay ?

He : No. But you can take me for one from the reverence I bear towards his spiritual instructions.

I : How many sons and daughters has he ?

He : Two sons and two daughters. (He then pointed out to a boy and a girl playing there as the grandchildren of M.

I : Does Master Mahasay give initiation to anybody ?

He : No. He does not.

It must have been about 7-30 p.m. when M again came upstairs. By that time about a dozen devotees gathered in that apartment, evidently to bask in the soulful company of M and spend the evening in prayers and *kirtans*. M requested to be excused saying that he delayed us long. We gave a suitable reply.

With a glow in his face he said, 'Come in. You shall visit our *Thakurs*.' We went in to the meditation room and that evening we again bowed down before the pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and other deities. Point-

ing to a picture he said, 'These are *Saptarshi Maharajas*.' It was rather a picture of the old type, and there was not much art in it to admire. He then showed us some cuttings of pictures from newspapers. They were pictures of the *kumbhamela* at Hardwar which took place that very year. 'This is Sitapati Maharaj conversing with the *sadhus* at Hardwar,' he explained. I asked, 'Who is Sitapati Maharaj ?' He replied, 'Swami Raghavananda.' Both the names were equally unfamiliar to us ; he then led us to the terrace, and we all prostrated before the sacred basil plant. I narrate this in detail to show that though he was an illumined sage, how punctiliously he observed these practices with a view to set an example to others, and fulfilled the dictum of the *Gita* in this respect.

That day it was *ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the fortnight), considered particularly auspicious by the Hindus. It must have been a day of fasting for him. He had a harmonium brought there through one of his attendant devotees and asked us to sing some Telugu songs. Our only qualification seemed to be that none of us knew anything of music, and we had never touched a harmonium or any other instrument. But there was one thing, namely,—that we were deeply devoted to the *kirtanas* of Tyagaraja. I explained to him that we did not know anything of music. However on his insistence I gave out the texts of some three or four *kirtanas* of Tyagaraja. I explained their meaning in English to him. On hearing them he burst out, 'Oh ! He is a great seer. A *mantra drashta*. He is a God-realized soul.'

After that he asked the young man with whom we had a conversation before to sing some Bengali songs for us. In the *Gospel* we had read the translation of many a Bengalee song which the Master used to sing, but that was the first time for us to hear Bengali songs of Ramprasad and Kamalakanta among the ancients, and Sjt. Girish Chandra Ghosh among the moderns. We considered our-

selves particularly fortunate to hear the favourite songs of the Master sung under the direction of a direct disciple. I said smilingly, 'We are exchanging bad for good music.' At this M blushed and exclaimed, 'Oh! No, no.'

We stayed on till 9 P.M. The *kirtan* was still proceeding. We rose up to take our leave. I explained to him how our stay had to be cut short. He felt sorry for my ill-health, and placed two beautiful oranges in my hand with a prayer in his heart for our spiritual well-being and progress. . . .

It will be presumptuous for anybody to attempt to assign the place of M among the Master's disciples. Maybe he is the least among them. But this much is certain, namely, that he has achieved what no other

(not excluding even the great Vivekananda) has done. He has built an indestructible shrine in letters to his Master, which shall stand as a Wonder of the World to the admiring gaze of posterity. As Vivekananda put it, it must be that the Master was with him in this unique achievement. The self-effacement, the love of humanity, and the immense *tapasya* that stood behind the achievement will be adored by mankind for ever.

The relics of two disciples of Buddha, Sri Sariputta and Mahamoggallana, are, at the time of writing this, being received with great eclat. And in this context we cannot but feel how fortunate we are to have seen with our own eyes an intimate disciple of an equally great One!

## THE POLITICS OF W. B. YEATS

BY GRATTAN FREYER

### I

The political views of W. B. Yeats were unconventional. He rejected a very large part of the assumptions on which what we understand by democratic civilization rests. There seemed to him no evidence that the great modern advances in science, medicine, popular education, or social reform have made men wiser, better or happier. The whole mood behind our anxiety for safety-first living was repulsive to him. Against the counting of heads, which forms the final argument under democracy, he asserted those unpopular values which it is convenient to call 'aristocratic'—personal courage and intellectual integrity. He opposed the popular modern religion of progress, believing rather in the exhilaration derived from maintaining an active relationship to heroic tradition. In the political field, his opinions were quite definitely of a Fascist order.

These views are a part of Yeats' work

which it is disconcerting to take seriously. In recent years fashion has demanded that intellectuals be 'progressive', and wishful thinking has sometimes even asserted that they always are. If that be so, Yeats is certainly an outspoken exception.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the basis of his opinions, both for their own interest and for the help they may give in understanding his poetry. For the greater part of his life, Yeats was intimately concerned with the fight of the Irish people to re-assert their national independence. His wider political views grew directly out of the provincialism of Irish politics. The most useful starting-point for the present purpose, therefore, is a consideration of Yeats' association with the Irish nationalist movement.

### II

Yeats' early childhood was passed in County Sligo in the West of Ireland. He

realized from the start of his career what an advantage Irish imaginative writers possessed in their non-industrial environment, where speech had not yet been reduced to its lowest common denominators, if they could once learn to harness its robust energy in literary form. In an early essay, *What is Popular Poetry?* he notes the preference of the country people for 'words and verses that keep half their meaning to themselves', and contrasts this with the growing explicitness and writing-down of popular poetry in Victorian England. Thus he was able to learn at first-hand from his Sligo countryside that technique of evocation and ambiguity which was only later brought back into English poetry with the spread of the symbolist movement from France and the re-discovery of Elizabethan ways of thinking suggested by Eliot through *The Sacred Wood*.

While he was still a boy Yeats' family moved to London, and his early teens were passed, except for Sligo holidays with his grandparents, in England. Later, as a young man, he divided his time mainly between London, Dublin, and Paris. It was at this stage of his life that a normally warm feeling for the environment of his childhood broadened and deepened into an interest in the Irish nationalist movement. It is difficult to imagine a change of scene more violent than that he underwent in leaving Sligo (before the appearance of the motor-car) for a suburb of Victorian London. In his *Autobiographies* we read of the first horror he felt at being dropped into the hub of an industrial and commercial civilization. The consequent nostalgia is, of course, the theme of *The Lake of Innisfree*. What impressed and terrified him most in his new environment was the anonymity of English life. Before leaving Sligo, a relative had said to him 'Here you are somebody, there you will be nobody.' Even at the end of his life, the contrast between the two civilizations seemed to him just as great. 'Because Ireland is a backward country,' he wrote in 1938, 'everybody is

unique and knows that if he tumbles down somebody will pick him up. But an Englishman must be terrified, for he knows that there is a man exactly like him at every street corner.'

It was as a direct result of these feelings that Yeats came to make common cause with the political movement, although he refused to identify himself with it completely. In London and Dublin he mixed with Fenians who believed fanatically in the armed struggle for an independent Ireland. For himself, however, independence was not the only, or even the principal, goal. He regarded the political movement as an instrument in a campaign to revitalize the popular culture of the nation and to preserve it from the corruption of commercialism. In criticizing the effects of industrialism, he was, of course, adopting the attitude of some of the more sensitive minds of Victorian England, but as an Irishman he felt that opportunities they lacked were opened up. Looking back in 1907 on this period of his life he wrote: 'I dreamed of enlarging Irish hate, till we had come to hate with a passion of patriotism what Morris and Ruskin hated ... Ruskin and Morris spent themselves in vain because they had found no passion to harness to their thought, but here (in Ireland) were unwasted passion and precedents in the popular memory for every needed thought and action.'

During this time the poet did not shrink from any aspect of political activity which he deemed necessary. When Queen Victoria visited Dublin near the end of her reign, he launched an original propaganda story to the effect that she had driven round Dublin in a cab 'a shilling between her finger and thumb, a bag of shillings under the seat.' But Yeats felt obliged to wage a simultaneous war on two fronts—against British imperialism and against the cruder, black-versus-white nationalism on his own side. He was sharing lodgings with the old Fenian John O'Leary, a conspirator of the Irish Republican Brotherhood who had passed much of his life in prison, and who



was a patriot of the old school. Two of his dictums which Yeats was fond of quoting reveal very well the critical stand this man maintained with regard to his own associates and the chivalry he was ready to extend to the other side. One of these was: 'There are things that a man must not do to save a nation.' The other 'Never has there been a cause so bad that it has not been defended by good men for good reasons.' This attitude set both Yeats and O'Leary in striking contrast with the newer type of politician who was even then gaining power in Ireland and indeed all over Europe. It is instructive to compare O'Leary's sayings with Balfour's terse comment at the outbreak of the first World War: 'We shall stick at nothing,' and Lloyd George's cynical defence later of the Italian Secret Treaty as a 'bargain.' Balfour's and Lloyd George's attitude marks them as men of the age that produced Michael Collins and Mussolini as decisively as O'Leary's places him in the world of Mazzini and John Stuart Mill. After his death, O'Leary becomes a symbol of Yeats' poems for this 'gentlemanly' ideal of patriotism.

Yeats became increasingly aware that he was fighting a losing battle as the opening years of the twentieth century passed. 'The heralds of the Irish Renaissance had blown lustily on their trumpets, but where were the eagles and the chariots?' It must be admitted that Yeats was more successful in converting Irish poets to an interest in politics than in permeating Irish political life with a liberal attitude to culture. He was instrumental in creating the National Theatre Movement which provided a forum to Irish dramatists in the Abbey Theatre. But the greatest of their productions, Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, proved too realistic for good patriots. They wished only for a romantic eulogy of the native peasantry, and for a long while every attempted performance broke up in a riot. There is a very bitter passage in Yeats' *Autobiographies* where he describes his feelings in watching the first of

these scenes of hooliganism: he wondered what part the political side of his own activities might have played in unleashing such patriotic hysteria. In 1907 we find Yeats bewailing the passing of leadership in the national movement to the class he despised most, the 'shopkeepers and clerks.' In September 1913 he wrote the poem which contains the well-known refrain:

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone  
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

This particular lament was proved by events to have been premature. When Easter Rebellion broke out in Dublin in 1916 the flame of romantic nationalism flared up brilliantly once more for a short interval. Three of the leaders who were subsequently shot were poets, and Sir Roger Casement's conduct at his trial for high treason was infused with the same spirit which had dominated O'Leary. Yeats was profoundly moved and regretted his earlier jeremiad. In a trilogy of poems written within a few days of the executions, he praised the courage of these men with lyric fervour. What impressed him most was that several of those shot had gone out to fight in the knowledge that they had already been betrayed, but believing that a deliberate blood-sacrifice was necessary. This is the theme of *Sixteen Dead Men, Easter 1916*, and *The Rose Tree*.

The Easter Rebellion, or rather the manner of its suppression, had its effect in arousing Irish public opinion to a last showdown with the British Government. In 1918 a Sinn Féin parliament was set up in Dublin, and spasmodic fighting developed slowly into a widespread guerilla war. This led eventually to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which established the Irish Free State. Another winter of fighting followed, this time civil war between the extremist republicans led by de Valera and the moderates who supported the compromise which the Treaty settlement represented. Only in 1922 was the new Free State administration able to restore a minimum of public order.

Yeats viewed the final stages of this long drawn-out struggle with very different sentiments from those he had felt over the Easter fighting. He was torn and distracted by the tension of the times through which he was living. He found the contemplative life, to which his chosen craft, together with his ill health, condemned him, extremely hard to bear. In several poems we feel the intense nostalgia for a life of action which affected the poet from middle age onward. In the role played by his swashbuckling friend Oliver Gogarty, and in that of Kevin O'Higgins, the first Irish Minister for Justice, he saw the rise of a new type of patriot whose attitude fascinated him. In the latter he found :

A soul incapable of remorse or rest,  
and the short poem *Death* was inspired by Kevin O'Higgins's assassination at the hands of republican gunmen in 1927. But as the fighting progressed even this new type of leader, far more ruthless than O'Leary would have ever been, proved unable to ride the whirlwind. For Yeats the state of the country during the long months of guerrilla war opened up a terrible vision of all—embracing anarchy and despair. In *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen* he wrote :

We who seven years ago  
Talked of honour and of truth,  
Shriek with pleasure if we show  
The weasel's twist, the weasel's tooth.

The first section of *The Second Coming* formulates more precisely the machinery of this disintegration :

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer ;  
Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold ;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and  
everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned ;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

In this poem, as Yeats indicates elsewhere, the falcon suggests the straight road of logic—in contrast to the butterfly, representing

the crooked road of intuition. The falcon flying out of control, therefore, suggests the hypertrophy of man's logical and scientific energies, which outbalance his more humane faculties. But the imagery has a second and equally impressive significance in symbolizing the relationship between the soldier and the civil power. The right relationship is for the politician to maintain the mastery, employing the soldier as an instrument of controlled destruction. But in the breakdown consequent on civil war the technician of destruction flies out of control and unleashes ever increasing violence :

The falcon cannot hear the falconer.

### III

The triumph of the Free State Forces in 1922 gave to Irish patriots everything of substance that they had struggled for, and offered at last a much-needed breathing-space. The campaign of 'seven heroic centuries' was at an end. There was an inevitable sense of *détente* and to some extent of anti-climax. It was a time for stock-taking. Once order was restored in the new state, it was imperative for the freed nation to discover its true personality and role in modern Europe.

Yeats never wrote anything in the nature of a study in pure political theory, but he held definite views on the country's need, which we can piece together from his prose and verse writings. For Ireland to profit by the unique opportunity offered by events two things were necessary. The country's past traditions and present potentialities must be critically re-examined. At the same time an eclectic attitude must be maintained to the experiences of other countries from which the new Ireland might learn. Above all, there must be no looking for easy solutions, nothing must be taken for granted. There was a natural tendency among patriots whose political education was based solely on Anglo-Irish history to assume that the revolution could be consummated merely by reversing

the more obvious signs of British occupation —by establishing a parliament in Dublin, by painting pillar-boxes green instead of red, and by playing *The Soldier's Song* on occasions when *God Save the King* would sound in Britain. Against this, Yeats demanded a scrutiny of the underlying assumptions of Irish society, and a form of government adapted to house best the talent of the nation. In a piece of advice to future revolutionaries he subsequently expressed himself forcibly :

Do not try to pour Ireland into any political system. Think first how many able men with public minds the country has, how many it can hope to have in the near future, and mould your system upon these men. It does not matter how you get them, but get them. Republics, Kings, Soviets, Corporate States, Parliaments, are trash ...

Democracy appeared to him to be a system of government admirably adapted to prevent such talents playing too large a role in the state. The poet looked back wistfully to that eighteenth century which he spoke of as the time when 'men of intellect reached the height of their power, the greatest position they ever attained in society and the State.' They had been losing their pre-eminence ever since, and his own experiences within the national movement and his observation of the civil war had convinced him how easily democracy in a young country might turn to crude majority rule, to mob hysteria, and to public violence. Authority and force must be given back their rightful role in the good society :

Might of the Church and the State,  
Their mobs put under their feet.  
O but heart's wine shall run pure,  
Mind's bread frow sweet.

Pacifism and democracy failed to recognize man's unconscious longing for violence and danger ; unless this be given its rightful, controlled outlet in strong government, it will find free play in the anonymous violence of public opinion :

What if the Church and the State  
Are the mob that howls at the door ?  
Wine shall run thick in the end,  
Bread taste sour.

Italian Fascism was established in the very year that the Free State triumphed, and it was only natural that one holding such views as Yeats did should be interested. It is interesting to notice that while Winston Churchill and others were praising Mussolini's role primarily as a champion against socialism, it was the dynamic Nietzschean aspect of fascist philosophy that appealed to Yeats. Though he scorned democracy, there is no merely negative hatred of socialism in his writings. In a speech at an international sports gathering in Dublin in 1924, he referred to Mussolini's ideas and well indicated the authoritarian direction his own thoughts were taking :

We do not believe that war is passing away, and we do not believe that the world is growing better and better. We even tell ourselves that the idea of progress is quite modern, that it has been in the world but two hundred years ; nor are we quite so stalwart as we used to be in our democratic politics. Psychologists and statisticians in Europe and in America have all challenged the foundations, and a great popular leader has announced to an applauding multitude, 'We will trample on the decomposing body of the goddess of liberty.' ... The steam has turned backwards, and generations to come will have for their task, not the widening of liberty, but recovery from its errors—the building up of authority, the restoration of discipline, the discovery of a life sufficiently heroic to live without the opium dream.

Yeats later visited Italy and found practical aspects of the fascist system which also appealed to him. The remodelling of the form and content of the Italian educational system, carried through by the philosopher Giovanni Gentile, while Minister for Education, seemed an experiment which Ireland should find

instructive. The principle of the corporate state was itself an idea which had appealed to Yeats many years previously. In the *Autobiographies* he speaks of his youthful arguments in favour of 'a law-made balance among trades and occupations' against his father's standpoint as a liberal and free-trader.

Yet it would be a mistake to imagine that Yeats swallowed every aspect of the Fascist or Nazi doctrines. Hitler seemed to him a lesser figure than Mussolini, though the Nazi laws for protecting impoverished ancient families attracted him. But under both dictatorships there were indications of a faith in numbers, an uncritical emphasis on quantity irrespective of quality, even cruder than that which he despised under democracy. He believed that eugenics was a matter which the state must take seriously before it was too late, and there are passages in his final writings which suggest an almost racist belief in the destiny of the Irish nation, but never, either in word or deed, did he countenance anti-semitism. Two close friends, Ezra Pound and Oliver Gogarty, were enthusiastic admirers of Hitler on this point, but Yeats himself remained unmoved.

These were long-term views. In matters of practical policy, the thinker compromised with his age, as every philosopher who wishes to have any influence on day-to-day affairs must. Yeats was nominated to the Free State Senate by the Cosgrave government, and he took his duties very seriously. It helps us to place his life in perspective when we find the poet who had rejected science and democracy and who had expressed grave misgiving over universal compulsory education discussing such routine matters as the sanitation and milk-supply for schools. His greatest speeches were, naturally, on cultural subjects, or on matters where he considered high principles were at stake. He spoke at length and with effect on the Irish case for the return of the Lane Art Collection, which is held in London on a now admitted legal

technicality. He served as chairman of an official Commission to select designs for the new Irish coinage, and immediately invited submissions from Yugoslav and Italian modelers as well as from Irishmen and Englishmen. The designs were judged strictly on their merits and those of an English artist were eventually chosen. On June 11, 1925 he delivered his great speech against the introduction of a bill prohibiting divorce in Ireland, an occasion which earned him many enemies among the new puritans who were coming to rule the country. It was less the actuality of the bill than the spirit which lay behind it that he attacked. He regarded it with some justification as the first step towards legalizing that majority tyranny he had always fought within the national movement. When a bill to establish a book censorship was introduced, he protested likewise, and subsequently continued to protest against its practical operation. To little effect, however. Its vigilance has been progressively extended, though, oddly enough, Yeats has remained almost the only distinguished Irish writer not to have had books named on this secular index.

Altogether Yeats' experiences in the upper chamber of the Irish legislature did not serve to resuscitate his faith in political democracy. He later spoke with distaste of his fellow-members as 'those old lawyers, old bankers, old business men, who, because all habit and memory, have begun to govern the world.' Irish politics threatened to combine the corruption of Latin parliamentary institutions with the philistinism of Anglo-Saxon Public life. Yeats decided at the end of his first six year term as Senator not to stand for re-election. His allegiances in Irish party politics were never very emphatic. He usually voted with the Cosgrave government, which had accepted the Anglo-Irish Treaty. After the change-over in public opinion had brought de Valera to the head, the two met, and it is said that each was impressed with the other's personality. But what de Valera represented

could hardly appeal to Yeats. Cosgrave's had been the party of the large farmers and those of the native aristocracy who accepted Home Rule. de Valera's power was based on the small peasantry and the new Irish industrialist, it was a party of 'shopkeepers and clerks' *par excellence*. Yeats longed for a new movement to arise which would consolidate by disciplined leadership the national tradition, and he toyed with extra-parliamentary ideas. When General O'Duffy began to organize an Irish fascist party in the early thirties, Yeats thought for a time that this might fill the role. *Three Songs to the Same Tune*, later re-written as *Three Marching Songs*, was originally composed with the activities of the 'Blueshirts' in mind. However, General O'Duffy soon showed himself a politician like the rest. On realizing his error, Yeats changed the title of the poem and published it with an introduction calling for a new party that should honour and unite all those within the national tradition who had lived 'with precision and energy.' Such a movement, he goes on, would 'promise not this or that measure but a discipline, a way of life ... There is no such government or party to-day, should either appear, I offer it these trivial songs and what remains to me of life.'

No such movement arose in Yeats' lifetime, and he gradually ceased to hope for anything from practical politics. But it would be wrong to picture the poet retiring from public life to hold up his hands in despair. He continued to handle the Irish theme in prose and verse. The heyday of nationalist fervour had now come to seem like a heroic dream. In a late poem, *The Municipal Gallery Revisited*, he describes his sentiments on looking at pictures of the revolutionary days :

This is not, I say

The dead Ireland of my youth, but an  
Ireland

The poets have imagined, terrible and gay.  
But he was still concerned more than ever

before to clarify and vindicate the great Irish tradition—Gaelic, eighteenth-century, and modern. In certain last ballads, such as *The O'Rahilly*, *Roger Casement* or *Come Gather Round Me, Parnellites*, he attained to a form of simple popular utterance, freed from literary affectations, which he had sought in vain in earlier life. His new heroes were all who had dared to live 'with precision and energy.' Their manner of living and dying appeared to him in the nature of a sacred challenge to the present and future generations :

Fail, and that history turns into rubbish,

All that great past to a trouble of fools.

The nation must be strengthened and disciplined by its knowledge of the past :

That we in coming days may be

Still the indomitable Irishry.

The most striking feature of Yeats' final attitude was the courage and optimism with which he viewed the future. There is a note that suggests extreme bitterness in some of the Last Poems, as he felt the strength of manhood slipping from him. But it would be wrong to regard these poems as more than the expression of one mood which afflicted him in his final years. In one poem, *The Circus Animals' Desertion*, he even succeeded in embodying this growing sense of failure into a remarkable poem ; the inward admission of the drying-up of the sources of poetic inspiration is used here as a highly affective theme. The strongest note in the final volume is an almost boyish assertiveness and self-confidence. There is no doubt that Yeats was made to feel happier than he might otherwise have been in rejecting so many of the faiths and opinions of his contemporaries partly by his acceptance of the cyclic view of history :

All things fall and are built again,

And those that build them again are gay,  
And partly by his spiritualistic researches. He believed that he had received supernatural evidence that we are nearing the end of a great cycle of human history which

began with the dawn of classical civilization and whose mid-point was the birth of Christ. Although he died before the Second World War had shown its full character, he had forecast a new armageddon and considered that this would eventually lead to the 'transvaluation of all values' of which Nietzsche spoke. The civilization we have known would turn bottom upwards. In the poem *The Second Coming*, published in 1921, he had already suggested that the disharmony and disintegration of this age formed the prelude to some great change involving both the close of our civilization and the opening of a new, of which the outlines were still indiscernible. In his final writings, this thought became a secure and precise conviction in consequence of his believed revelation, and it is the basis of such poems as *The Gyres*, *Lapis Lazuli*, and his own epitaph *Under Ben Bulbin*. Even war, he insisted in a final pamphlet, must be accepted gaily both for its own sake and as a means of hastening us on towards the great transformation, when the rejects of our civilization would come into their own and must therefore rejoice :

We who have hated the age are joyous  
and happy.

There is little danger of Yeats' more extreme opinions being influential. His views do not form a philosophy in any accepted sense. In fact, it is only too easy to point out illogicalities and inconsistencies. But, they do possess an inner coherence of their own—perhaps in the last analysis they will be regarded as the errors of genius. In any case, they form the essential backbone of his development. It is inconceivable that he would have maintained the steady evolution of his verse from the naive lyricism of *Innisfree* to the tautness and intensity of his work between *The Tower* (1928) and *Last Poems and Plays* (1940), had he not found it possible to fill the vacuum left today by the decay of traditionally held faiths. It is primarily for this reason that his belief should repay the trouble of understanding them. In addition, whatever the merits of the remedies he proposed, there is no doubt that he pointed a critical finger at some of the weak points of democratic civilization which many of us find only too comfortable to take for gra

\*By courtesy of the International Literary Pool,  
UNESCO.

## VEDANTA AND THE WEST\*

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

I am literally overwhelmed by your gracious words of welcome. If I give you my thanks, however, it will sound terribly formal. I only pray that I may deserve your love and affection and dedicate the rest of my days to the service of India and the world. Your appreciation of my insignificant

work in America will always be a source of courage and inspiration to me.

By far the most important event that has taken place in India between my last visit, in 1938, and my present one, is the attainment of political freedom. My salutations go to those brave souls who have sacrificed their all to win India's independence. My most respectful salutations go to Mahatma Gandhi, who led the country in its fight for freedom. Both by his life and by

\*Speech delivered on 15 March 1949 in Calcutta by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the New York Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, at his public reception in the University Institute.

his death he has created respect for India in every part of the world. Independence has no doubt given us a new confidence in our destiny and at the same time has brought us recognition among other nations. But let us not forget that the Goddess of Freedom is an extremely jealous deity, who can be propitiated only by constant sacrifice, unceasing vigilance, and high courage. Without stern moral discipline and ethical integrity, freedom becomes as illusory as a mirage.

Political freedom is a means to an end. It enables a nation to express its soul. The soul of free England has expressed itself through the system of parliamentary government, and that of America through the ideal of equality and democracy; but the soul of India has always found expression through spiritual channels by proclaiming the reality of God, the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, and the harmony of religions. India, even during the days of her greatest power, never stained her hands with the blood of other nations. She has never been politically aggressive. Like gentle dew-drops opening the buds into flowers, her culture has opened the inner life of peoples wherever she has sent her cultural emissaries. Today, all over the world, the sky is darkened by ominous clouds. The angel of death seems to be hovering over the house-tops once more. Let India throw her weight on the side of life and peace. Let her assume the moral and spiritual leadership of the world in this supreme crisis of humanity.

You have asked me to tell you something about the great people of America. Though outwardly dissimilar in many respects, America and India have a strange fascination for each other. In spite of her material progress, America cherishes high respect for India's spiritual culture and has tremendous faith in her future mission. India, on her part, has been sending some of her best young men and women to America to acquire knowledge in the modern sciences.

India and America have never been al-

together strangers to each other. As you all know, Christopher Columbus set out to discover a route to India and her fabulous wealth and instead stumbled upon America. The chests of tea thrown overboard in the Boston Tea Party, which set off the American War of Independence, came from India. And it is interesting to note that even now the only cows that thrive in the southern states of Florida and Texas come from India and are known as 'brahminy' cows.

By far the most important event to bring India into the thought current of American life was the appearance of the young sannyasin Swami Vivekananda as the delegate of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions held in 1893 in connexion with the Columbian Exposition. How on that Monday—September 11th—at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Swamiji, with his noble bearing, his handsome face, his musical voice, his brilliant apparel, and his compelling personality, electrified the seven thousand people who packed the great hall, when he addressed them as 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' has now passed into history. How well they understood—those learned men and women with their Yankee common sense—that a sound brotherhood of men on earth can be created only on a spiritual basis! Swami Vivekananda, as he stood in that historic conference, formed the confluence of two great streams of thought, the Oriental and the Occidental, and dominated them both. In order to realize the full significance of the occasion, it is necessary to know the background of the Swamiji's thought and also that of the contemporary American culture.

After his master's passing away, Swami Vivekananda travelled the length and breadth of India, studying with learned pundits, meditating in caves and wildernesses, talking with princes and with beggars. But all the time his sharp eyes were focused on the problems of his motherland. He became convinced that spirituality was the backbone of the Indian nation and its mission to the

outside world. But what appalled him was the crushing poverty of India, the backwardness of her masses, and the stagnation of her society. How to rejuvenate Hinduism and make it once more the vehicle of a great spiritual culture was the substance of his thoughts by day and of his dreams by night. Finding no response from his own countrymen, he thought he would go to the scientific and dynamic people of the West, share with them the much needed knowledge of Vedanta, and bring to India in return the secrets of their science and technology to raise the standard of living of the Indian people. He thought it was futile to preach religion among them without first trying to relieve their poverty and suffering. He had the clearest vision that India, revitalized through the knowledge of science and technology learnt from the West, would once more become the spiritual leader of the world. It was the finger of God, he knew through direct experience, that led him to the New World.

America, too, was ready to receive the young prophet from the East. From the very beginning of America's colonial history religion had played an important part in her social and cultural life. The pilgrims who came to the New World in the *Mayflower* in 1620 had left first England and then Holland for the sake of freedom of worship. The later colonists were dissenters who could not submit to the religious restrictions imposed by the then rulers of England. These were the forbears of those sturdy, religious minded New Englanders who, two centuries later, became the leaders of America's intellectual and spiritual movements.

The American Constitution and the Bill of Rights show the influence not only of the writings of Locke, but also of the Holy Bible. The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims the equality of men and emphasizes their God-given and inalienable right to enjoy 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' bears the impress of the Christian ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Thomas Paine,

the fiery high priest of the American Revolution, wrote in his pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in 1776: 'O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only tyranny but the tyrant! Stand forth! Every spot of the world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her as a stranger. And England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind!' Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address, spoke of America as a nation 'conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.'

A tremendous passion for freedom, equality, justice, and oneness permeated the thinking of Americans during the first hundred years of their independence. To these ideals Swami Vivekananda gave a spiritual interpretation from the standpoint of Vedanta.

The cultural history of America during the nineteenth century presents a panorama of events which found their fulfilment in the Columbian Exposition and the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The original thirteen colonies had grown into the United States of America, a land of inexhaustible natural resources, into which the European immigrants brought not only the flavour of an older civilization, but also a spirit of adventure, technical skills, and an indomitable courage. During this period America produced a remarkable number of statesmen, politicians, jurists, inventors, economists, practical men, idealists, military experts, thinkers, poets, and writers— all men of uncommon calibre. Scientists and technologists flooded the country with new inventions that revolutionized agriculture, industry, and methods of transportation. Towns grew into cities. The material prosperity of the country was accompanied by a new awakening of men's minds and consciences. Its penitentiary system, based on humanitarian principles, became an object of envy to European nations. In 1833 an anti-slavery society supported by the Quakers was started in



Philadelphia. The five years between 1850 and 1855 saw the flowering of American literature, a period that has hardly ever been surpassed in imaginative vitality. During this time were published *Representative Men*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of Seven Gables*, *Moby Dick*, *Pierre*, and *Leaves of Grass*. In the nineteenth century flourished great men of culture like Hawthorne, Poe, Whittier, Longfellow, Thoreau, Whitman, Emerson, Lowell, and Holmes. It was at this time, as well, that the historian Bancroft, Mr. Justice Story, the artist and naturalist John James Audubon, and the botanist Asa Grey were at the height of their powers.

The Transcendental Movement, of which Ralph Waldo Emerson was leader, and Thoreau and Alcott staunch supporters, was in a sense the forerunner of the Vedanta Movement of Swami Vivekananda. Emerson was influenced by the philosophy of Greece, the ethics of China, the poetry of the Sufis, and by the mystical ideas of India. He was a keen student of the *Bhagavad Gita* and was familiar with the doctrines of the *Upanishads*. Henry Thoreau, Emerson's neighbour for twenty-five years, read and discussed with him in great detail the Hindu religious classics. He wanted to write a joint Bible taking materials from the Asiatic scriptures, and adopted for his motto: *Ex Oriente Lux*—Light from the East. By 1840 the Transcendental Club, founded in Concord, was in full swing. Walt Whitman, who was a contemporary of the Concord philosophers, seems also to have come very near to Vedantic idealism. *Leaves of Grass* breathes the spirit of identity with all forms of life. The *Song of the Open Road* is full of Vedantic sentiments. In the spirit of a wandering monk, Whitman writes:

'Allons! We must not stop here!

However sweet these laid-up stores—however convenient this dwelling,

We cannot remain here,

However sheltered this port and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here,

However welcome the hospitality that

surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while.'

An apostle of democracy, Whitman was a religious individualist, free from all church conventions and creeds. To him religion consisted entirely of inner illumination—'the secret, silent ecstasy.' The land that gave birth to Walt Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau, did not find it difficult to understand the Hindu monk Vivekananda and his message of universality, equality, freedom, and oneness.

But the marriage of East and West conceived of by Emerson and Thoreau was not at that time consummated. Suddenly the American life-current turned into a new channel. The desire to possess 'bigger and better' things began to cast its spell upon the majority of American minds. Economic utilities and corporations sprang into existence, and the spiritual and romantic glow of the pioneering days was transformed into the sordidness of competitive materialistic life.

Among the several events that conspired to shatter the dream of the Concordians may be mentioned the Gold Rush of 1849, which diverted people's attention in other directions, the Civil War, one of the most terrible events in American history, and the rapid development of science and technology, which brought about a great change in people's attitude toward life, intensifying their desire for material progress. It may also be noted here that the money-hungry and pleasure-loving immigrants from poverty-stricken parts of Europe, who now began to come to America in large numbers, dampened the spiritual ardour of the early colonists. The publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species* caused a revolution both in natural science and in men's thinking. The implications of the doctrine of evolution influenced every field of thought: law and history, economics and sociology, philosophy, religion, and art.

But people were by no means satisfied. Reflective men were disappointed by the tawdriness and materialism of their society. Their souls hungered for the freedom and joy

that the scientific method of thinking could not inspire and that could not be found in the possession of material things. The innate idealism and spiritual nature of enlightened Americans made them yearn for a philosophy that, without going counter to the scientific method, would show the way to a greater vision of life, interpreting man's thought, feeling, and action and harmonizing the diverse claims of science, the humanities, and mystical experience. The time, indeed, was ripe for the fulfilment of Thoreau's dream of a marriage of East and West, of a synthesis of science and mysticism. To bring about this synthesis, no worthier person could have been found than Swami Vivekananda of India.

The United States of America, fermenting with new ideas, overflowing with new vitality, always eager for new truths no matter where found, and in a large measure free from the encrustations of class, caste, and race prejudice, was ready to welcome this representative of mystical India, the bearer of an ancient yet virile spiritual culture. This seems to me, ladies and gentlemen, the chief reason for the spontaneous welcome accorded by the Americans to Swami Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions, and also for the abiding interest they have shown ever since in the Vedanta movement he inaugurated.

At the Parliament of Religions Swami Vivekananda presented the universal aspect of Hinduism. He emphasized the Hindu attitude of respect toward others' faith, described the divine nature of the human soul, and demonstrated the rational basis of spiritual experience and the scientific validity of religion. All this has been recorded and is even now read with deep interest by spiritual students. As his fame spread, the Swamiji was invited to different parts of America to explain the doctrines of Hinduism. Drawing-rooms and clubs, and respectable homes as well, were open to him. Everywhere he was received with respect and affection. Though called a 'cyclonic' Hindu on account of his untiring activity, his soul pined for solitude and meditation. At heart he was a mystic,

philosopher, and poet. This desire for peace and solitude was fulfilled, however, only after two years of strenuous work, when he spent seven weeks of intense meditation and study at Thousand Island Park, on the beautiful St. Lawrence river. There he made plans for his future work in India.

Even during Swami Vivekananda's lifetime, demands came from America for more Swamis and Vedanta centres. At present there are a dozen Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order preaching the ideals of the Hindu *dharma*, following in the footsteps of their great leader. Four Swamis of the Order have given up their lives in the discharge of their duties. The congregations at the Vedanta centres consist mainly of Christians, with a sprinkling of Jews. There are many people in the United States—and their number is growing—who take religion seriously and are looking for practical disciplines such as concentration and meditation. They wish to be guided by teachers in their inner development. They want a rational statement of spiritual truths and seek a universal religion that will be in conformity with other universal truths. Such men and women are the regular students of the Vedanta centres. A number of American men and women have completely dedicated their lives to the practice of religious disciplines and live with the Swamis at the centres. Outside the congregation, the Swamis have a large circle of friends among university professors, clergymen, lawyers, and businessmen—friends who admire their work and character. The Swamis are often invited by churches, educational institutions, cultural societies, and other similar organizations to speak on the Hindu religion and philosophy. And everywhere they are treated with respect and friendliness. The Vedanta work is carried on in the usual unobtrusive vedantic manner. Naturally, the dramatic element that characterized the first phase of the movement is no longer present. The work is now being consolidated on a firm and permanent foundation.

It is too early to estimate the long-range

effect of the Vedanta movement in America. It may appear almost insignificant if judged by the size of the buildings or of the congregations. But its intangible influence is to be sought elsewhere—in the silent transformation of the lives of a few here and there, and in the liberalizing of America's religious thought. There is a genuine effort in America to replace the old spirit of exclusiveness by a new spirit of fellowship. The Christian ministers are talking about respect for other faiths and about the necessity for meditation and the inner life. The divinity of Buddha, Krishna, and other prophets is admitted by many of them. Among the several factors that are bringing about this revolution in the thought world of America, Vedanta is an important one. Like a leaven it is silently raising the spiritual consciousness of the country.

It was Swami Vivekananda who built the spiritual bridge joining India and America. His dream of creating a new world culture through the exchange of healthy Hindu and Western ideals may not long remain unfulfilled. Hindu students have been flocking to American universities to learn science and technology. With a little preliminary training they can be made effective channels to spread a knowledge of Indian culture in America, thus creating further goodwill for India. America's businessmen and technical experts are being invited to India to develop the material resources of the country and organize its educational and health programs. Perhaps in the near future American students will come in large numbers to India to learn the profundities of the spiritual life.

In order to bring about true friendship between India and America, two things are necessary. America must learn—as she is fast learning through experience—to regard moral and spiritual achievements as more valuable than material aggrandizement. After the founders of the American civilization were highly ethical and religious-minded men. Let there be no mistake about the fact that what is abiding in the entire Western culture has been influenced by a

high standard of ethics. Religion has left an impress on the painting of Raphael and Leonardo Da Vinci, the sculpture of Michelangelo, the music of Palestrina and Bach, and the writings of Milton, Blake, Browning, and Tennyson, to mention but a few names.

But more important is the reorientation of Hinduism itself. Our eternal religion must come out of its isolation and become dynamic and aggressive. The whole world today is perishing for want of spiritual vision. This is precisely what Hinduism can supply. The malady the world is suffering from is a spiritual malady. Economic confusion, moral disintegration, and political uncertainty are but the outer symptoms of this deep-seated disease. The challenge of aggressive evil abroad in the world today can be met only by aggressive goodness. Greed, sensuality, jealousy, and the other vices that are undermining the social structure both in India and elsewhere, can be removed only by the power of spirit. Neither ethical humanism nor the development of science and technology can completely correct the present human situation. A tremendous responsibility rests upon the Hindu religion. Stagnation is death. During the days of her power, India sent her religious missionaries outside her own borders. The same thing must be done today. The one great obstacle in the way of Indo-American friendship is the view, cherished by many Indians as well as Americans, that it is India who must learn everything from the West and that the West has nothing to learn from India. Friendship is a two-way road.

I have heard from several Western thinkers that the fault of the Hindus is that they do not know the greatness of their own religion. If we do not have respect for our own culture, no one will have any respect for us. Macaulay wanted to Westernize the Hindus through English education, and he almost succeeded. Today the Indian leaders who have been influenced by Western civilization are fighting with the very soul of India. This is responsible, in a large measure, for our present

confusion and uncertainty. The *Bhagavad Gita* points out, in its last verse, the way to India's greatness: 'Wherever there is co-operation between Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna, the wielder of the military power, there is prosperity, victory, glory, morality, and order.' This means that a close co-operation between India's spiritual power and Governmental authority can alone lead to the complete unfoldment of India's inner soul. When the ruling power does not support the spiritual power there is a decline in spiritual power. This lesson is writ large in the history of India during the past thousand years.

Many misconceptions about Hinduism are cherished even by so-called educated Hindus. We are told that Hinduism is anti-scientific, otherworldly, and communal. But it is not true that Hinduism is opposed to the scientific method. The Hindu seers tell us that the validity of religious truth lies in personal experience, reasoning, and the testimony of others. The *Bhagavad Gita* asks the student to cultivate the questioning habit. Hinduism never accepts dogma as the final authority. The *Vedas* tell us to cultivate the knowledge of both science and super-science, that is to say, of both secular and spiritual knowledge. The *Mundaka Upanishad* says that ignorance and doubt are destroyed only when one knows both the transcendental Reality and its manifestation in time and space. The *Isha Upanishad* declares that he who worships only science enters into blinding darkness, but into a greater darkness enters he who worships only super-science. The wise man cultivates the knowledge of both. By means of science he overcomes physical handicaps like disease and death, and by means of super-science he attains to Immortality. It is only for the past three hundred years that India has lagged behind in the knowledge of the physical sciences. As Lord Acton has said, to condemn a culture for three hundred years of failure and overlook its three thousand years of achievement gives a wrong view of history.

Hinduism does not explain away the world

as a dream, nor does it minimize worldly values. Whatever may be the highest experience of illumined souls--and even they did not dare to despise the world during the normal state of consciousness--ordinary men have always been exhorted to acquire ethical virtues (*dharma*), respect wealth (*artha*), and heighten the capacity for enjoyment (*kama*). Then alone are they qualified for *moksha*, or communion with the Infinite. There is neither a short-cut nor an easy way to salvation. No one has ever dreamt of a fuller or more comprehensive view of life than the Hindu seers, who laid down the rule that boyhood should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, youth to the enjoyment of material pleasures, old age to contemplation, and the hour of death to the vision of the eternal Truth. Hinduism does not negate the world. It only reinterprets it in terms of spirit.

Hinduism is not a communal religion. Unlike Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, it does not share the Semitic belief that there is only one scheme of salvation. The Lord says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: 'In whatever way people render me their worship, I accept it and fulfil their desires.' Single-minded devotion to one's own faith, and respect for that of others, is the keynote of the Hindu *dharma*, reiterated by the Hindu prophets from the Vedic rishis down to Sri Ramakrishna. A genuine Hindu finds it easy to practise the universal religion. Look at Sri Ramakrishna. A Hindu to the very marrow, a believer in even the minutest details of his own faith, he yet saw God in all faiths and attracted devotees of all religions. His experiences and teachings are moulding the spiritual life of many Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the Western world. The harmony of religions can only be established on the sure foundation of the deep spiritual experience that God is the centre on which converge the radii of the various faiths. Let a Hindu be taught to be a genuine Hindu, a Moslem a genuine Moslem, a Christian a genuine Christian, and there will be peace among the religions. The

other methods—religious eclecticism, shallow liberalism, ethical humanism, or what the Americans call the 'Pollyanna' attitude toward other faiths—will not succeed in eliminating religious friction, but will rather shake the foundation of religion itself.

I am told that the idea of a secular state in India is based on the assumption that Hinduism is a communal religion and also that India is a land of many religions. The second assumption is as false as the first. India is not a land of many religions. Her spiritual culture has been moulded by the *Sanatana Dharma* formulated by the Indo-Aryan rishis, which in the course of its evolution has thrown out several offshoots and has in addition assimilated, while remaining true to its fundamental ideals, healthy elements from other faiths. Till it is recognized that the culture of India in its every phase has been moulded by the *Sanatana Dharma*, I am afraid there will be neither peace nor happiness nor strength in our motherland.

I know that, like everything else, Hinduism has been abused. Many encrustations now cover up its shining core. Remove these abuses, by all means, but for heaven's sake do not give up Hinduism on their account. Superstition can be removed only through education. Let Hinduism be studied in every school and college, side by side with modern science and psychology. That which is outmoded and effete will be discarded, and that which is eternally true will come out brighter and purer. Thus we shall remove the stigma that Hinduism is a reactionary religion and make it a really effective channel for promoting democracy, social justice, and the welfare of the masses.

We must take pride in our spiritual culture. This is the way of life bequeathed to us by our forefathers. The great peoples of the world sacrifice their lives and their property for the preservation of their way of life. Today England and America are doing everything in their power to protect their culture from external enemies. But the enemies of our culture, it seems, are more within than with-

out. The more we take pride in our spiritual heritage, the easier it will become for us to banish such petty things as provincial jealousies or personal hankerings for name, fame, and possessions. Our present national leaders will do well to remember the pregnant words of Winston Churchill that those who want to see farthest into the future of a nation must see farthest into its past.

A great revolution is silently brewing in the thought-world of today. Undue emphasis on science has disturbed the balance between the body, mind, and soul of man. Physical science has given the Western races great power, which, if not properly handled, may bring about not only their own doom but the collapse of human civilization itself. But the West will not relinquish this power. Its problem is how to utilize this power not only for its own benefit but for the welfare of the whole world. The solution of the problem will come from religion. For the purely mechanistic interpretation of life and the universe no longer satisfies the soaring soul of the West.

In India our problem is how to preserve the purity of our spiritual culture and at the same time remove our social stagnation, poverty, and ignorance. This must be accomplished through the knowledge of science and technology. Otherwise our spiritual ideals of the divinity of the soul and the brotherhood of men will remain mere academic concepts.

The divorce of science from religion is a major tragedy of our times. Science and religion need each other. In the interest of human welfare religion should become scientific and science religious. This means that religion must not contradict reason, and the application of scientific discoveries must not be opposed to ethical and spiritual laws. In a harmony of science and religion lies the future hope of humanity. Only a few months ago, Professor Santayana told me, in Rome, that Vedanta, and Vedanta alone, can bridge the gulf between science and religion.

The West has been the leader in the development of scientific thought. The East has

been the custodian of spiritual truths. America is fast becoming the guardian of Western culture after the devastation of Europe caused by the last two great wars. India is the heart of mystic Asia. It was America that Swami Vivekananda chose as the spring-board for his action in the West. Like Thoreau, he dreamt of the union of East and West for the flowering of a new world culture.

In the past, when East and West have met, such meetings have been accompanied by tremendous revolutions in the realm of human thought. Thanks to the development of science and technology, they have been brought together again. During the first phase

of this contact, the West treated Eastern culture as alien and shunned it. During the second phase, also, the East was treated as alien but was studied objectively by an inquisitive West. Now the relationship has entered a third phase. Though still regarded as alien in many respects, the East is regarded as a part of humanity. Hence the West wants to understand it and assimilate its culture.

May this new contact between East and West, which by the inexorable march of events is taking place before our very eyes, help to bring forth the world's Unborn Soul, for whose sake all humanity is anxiously yet patiently bearing its present travail!

## INDIA AND HER SAINTS

BY AKSHAYAKUMAR BANERJEA

Ever since the earliest dawn of Indian civilization saints and seers have played a unique role in moulding its character and directing the course of its development. Its foundation was laid by the ancient seers (*rishis*) of the *Vedas*, who in their deepest spiritual experience realized that all the finite and ever-changing diversities constituting the cosmic order have as their ultimate source and substratum one infinite and eternal, self-shining and self-revealing Truth (*satya*), which is immanent in and transcendent to them all, and are governed and regulated and harmonized by one spiritual principle (*rita*)—the supreme Law of the *being* and *becoming* of that Supreme Truth. They, with their inner eyes, discovered that the world-order, though material and mechanical in outer appearance, is spiritual in essence, and that all the apparently blind forces of nature are in reality modes of self-expressions of a plurality of self-conscious forces or spiritual powers (*devata*), which again are the diversified self-manifestations of one Divine Power—the Power of Truth. They further discovered that every man as a freely moving

self-conscious agent within this phenomenal world is endowed by the Divine plan of this cosmic order with an inherent capacity to pierce through the veil of appearances by dint of his voluntary self-discipline—the systematic discipline of his body and mind, his thoughts, feelings, desires, speeches, and actions—and to realize the *Truth* and the *Law* in himself and the world.

Accordingly these ancient teachers of Indian culture and civilization proclaimed with the irresistible strength of their own realization that man is born in this world with a spiritual mission, with a supreme spiritual ideal immanent in his essential nature, and that the true success of human life lies in the actual realization of this ideal through proper regulation of all the departments of its self-expressions in that direction. They taught that all the duties of human life in all the spheres of its activities should be so prescribed that man may be true to his own essential spiritual nature and to the spiritual basis of the universe and of all human relations within it, and may ultimately be blessed with the direct experience of the infinite eternal bliss-

ful Spiritual Truth—the real truth of his own existence and of the cosmic order. Life has to be put, through voluntary efforts, in tune with the Truth and the Law—with *satya* and *rita*,—with *Brahman* and *Dharma*,—with the Infinite Eternal Absolute Spirit behind and beyond the world and the Principle of Its self-manifestation within the world. This spiritual outlook on the world-order and on the human life seeking for self-fulfilment within it constitutes the basis and determines the progressive structure of Indian culture and civilization. It had its origin in the spiritual experiences of saints and seers of the earliest vedic age.

From that remote vedic age upto the present time, saints and sages have always been the true leaders of India. As with the advance of time the Indo-Aryan society grew bigger and bigger and the people were placed in more and more complicated circumstances, and as the natural urge for self-preservation, self-development, and self-expansion brought the people face to face with more and more puzzling social, political, racial, economic, and moral problems, newer and newer types of saints and sages appeared on the scene, and with their minds illumined by the Divine Light taught the people appropriate methods for solving the practical problems and tiding over all difficulties, consistently with the dynamic spiritual outlook on the world and the human life. The later saints verified in their own lives the Truth and the Law seen by the ancient seers and demonstrated how they could be made the governing principles of individual and collective life at all times and under all sorts of environmental conditions. India has in no age been without saints of the highest order of spiritual realization, and hence the ideal of human life—the ideal of culture and civilization—has never been lowered in India. The light kindled by the vedic *rishis* has never been extinguished.

India had of course to pass through many periods of darkness and despair. She had her due share of natural catastrophes, racial

animosities, materialistic ambitions, foreign aggressions, internal revolutions, etc. etc., which in different periods of her long history put to the severest tests the spiritual ideal immanent in her soul. But the Soul of India as manifested through the lives of her saints has always proved to be death-defying and all-harmonizing. The spiritual view of life and the world, on which her national culture is based, has never acknowledged defeat. Whenever the dark forces of materialism and militarism took temporary possession of the land, true India took refuge in the hermitages of saints and waited for favourable turns of events. She was always conscious within her soul that the seed of destruction was inherent in the very nature of materialism and militarism, in the very constitution of the *rakshasa* and the *asura* bhavas in the world. She knew within herself that these Satanic forces must spend themselves within a short time and kill themselves in accordance with the Divine plan of the universe. She believed that Divine Power must come down in due course and deliver the human society from these forces of evil. Time and again her expectation has been fulfilled, her faith in the Divine scheme of the world vindicated, and her deep-rooted spiritual idealism justified. When the cyclonic upheavals of the necessarily short-lived materialistic forces subsided, true India came out from the hermitages of the saints, revealed herself to the outer world in her immortal spiritual glories and began to reign again over the intellects and minds and hearts and activities of the people at large. The saints of India have in all ages been the true custodians of the spirit of Indian culture and civilization. The history of the inner life of India has been the history of her saints and sages, the persons who realized the spiritual truth of the universe and the spiritual meaning of life and those who consistently interpreted their realizations in terms of the intellect and the heart and applied them to all spheres of existence.

It should not be understood that all the

peoples of all the places, now included within the geographical boundaries of India, have in all ages been consciously guided by the eternal principles and the supreme spiritual ideals which lie at the basis of Indian culture. India had territorial expansions and contractions in different ages. She had cycles of growth and decay. Her inhabitants were divided into various political units, social groups, racial stocks, and religious sects. Her life underwent various changes in its external features. But the centre of her life, the source of her inexhaustible vitality, has all through lain in her deeply spiritual outlook, in the dynamic urge of the spiritual Ideal which inwardly operated in the soul of all her children in all ages amidst all the varying circumstances and all the external differences. The spiritual Truth might have originally revealed itself to the illumined consciousness of the earliest seers in one small corner of this vast territory, whether in some Himalayan cave, or somewhere in the Indus valley, or on the sacred banks of the Saraswati. The immortal soul of living India might perhaps have made its first shining appearance on the level of distinct human consciousness through the medium of a few exceptionally talented individuals in some forgotten spot of the Indian soil. True India is to be searched for in such self-expressions of her eternal soul, and not in the external features of her body. Her true nature has been manifested brilliantly in the spiritual realizations of the unbroken series of saints, who have flourished in different ages in different parts of the country. The body of India has spread out as far as the spiritual influences of these saints have been felt. India has grown bigger and bigger in bodily size with the increase of the sphere of the dynamic spiritual influences of her saints.

In every age true India is to be met with, not in the tumults and confusions and upheavals and depressions through which her outer life passes and moves on, but in her self-expressions though the disciplined lives, spiritual realizations and inspired teachings

of her enlightened saints and sages. True India has become more and more self-conscious and spiritually powerful with the advent of such enlightened persons. She has progressively realized the spiritual treasures of her soul in and through her literature and arts, her sciences and philosophies, her social and economic and political organizations, her diverse dogmas and methods of religious culture, etc. all of which are ensouled by the Truth and the Law experienced by the seers and saints in their inner consciousness. This spiritual idealism has exercised its informing influence upon the atmosphere of all the territories which India has in different epochs of her history accepted as her own and established sovereignty over the minds and hearts and lives of all the peoples whom she has embraced as her children. The centre of India's cultural life might outwardly have moved from place to place in accordance with the changes of the political, social, economic, and physical conditions of the country. But in course of the last thousands of years India has never lost herself, has never lost her soul, has never been deprived of appropriate vehicles of her self-expression, or of saints for conveying the message of her soul.

It is no wonder that the national historians (*pauranikas*) and the national poets of India, in their descriptions of the deeper currents of India's social, political, and cultural life, are found to have given only secondary attention to the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, to the rivalries and hostilities among races and communities and nations, to the exploits of monarchs and conquerors and politicians, and to have employed their extraordinary talents and energies so assiduously in recording and glorifying the parts which the saints and the spiritual heroes played in the refinement of the people's moral and spiritual ideas and the development of their domestic and social and national life in conformity to those ideas. The history of the inner life of India has really been the history of her saints and sages, of the super-ordinary men of spiritual enlightenment, who



have in different ages vivified in their own lives the spiritual truths and ideals immanent in her soul and presented them in the most practicable forms to the people of the society, and who have in times of national crises guided the people with the torch of Divine Light in their hands and brought peace and order and purity and strength to the society with the aid of the Divine Power manifested through them. Saints and sages are, of course, not the monopoly of India. By Divine dispensation such men of spiritual light are born in every country, in every race, in every nation, in every section of mankind. But in no other country they are looked upon as the true representatives of the real life of the society or the nation; nowhere else they are universally accepted as the true leaders of thought and culture of the entire community; nowhere else do they exercise such a dominating influence upon all the departments of the individual and collective life of the people. The position of saints in Indian history is unique, and this is an index of the spiritual basis of Indian culture and civilization.

## II

The cultural atmosphere of the human race is ruled by two distinct types of leaders, saints and intellectual geniuses. In most countries intellectual geniuses really rule, while only lip-homage is paid to saints or spiritually enlightened persons. But in India even the greatest intellects have in all ages acknowledged the superiority of saints, not only in any closed domain of so-called religion, but in the whole sphere of the government of individual and collective life. The philosophers, the scientists, the social reformers, the political leaders, the warriors, the administrators, the economists,—the greatest thinkers of all classes have always agreed that all the departments of human life should be efficiently regulated with the supreme spiritual ideal in view and hence in strict accordance with the universal moral and spiritual principles underlying the evolution of the cosmic process and

the development of the humanity in the world. To them, accordingly, Religion has never been a particular closed domain within the wider human life having various independent fields of self-expression. They have all been fully convinced of the organic unity of human life with a spiritual soul as its dynamic centre and an ideal of spiritual self-fulfilment as the ultimate goal of all its various endeavours. Religion, in the sense of spiritual self-discipline, has therefore been accepted by all classes of intellectualists as the governing principle of the entire life.

This being their view of human life and its fulfilment, the intellectual geniuses of all classes have, in all the departments of life in which they specially applied themselves, humbly followed the guidance of saints, who are spiritually enlightened. Saints have been, in India, teachers of human life as a whole, while the intellectual geniuses have been teachers in particular branches of human knowledge and activity. All schools of philosophy, which have grown in India, have recognized the spiritual experiences of saints as the strongest proof about the nature of the ultimate Truth—the Truth of human life, the Truth of the cosmic order, the Truth of existence. All the discoveries and creations of the human intellect have been seriously sought to be reconciled with, or affiliated to the spiritual realizations of the recognized saints.

The fundamental distinction between the spiritual realization of a true saint and the intellectual knowledge of a rationalistic thinker is that the consciousness of a saint rises to a supra-intellectual plane, in which it transcends the region of time, space, and relativity and of sense-perception, inference, and rules of formal and material logic, and comes face to face with the Eternal, Infinite-Absolute, in which knowing and feeling and being become one integral experience, and in which it, being relieved of the effort to know the Truth, becomes perfectly illumined by and identified with the Truth. The intellectual consciousness may no doubt enormously expand its field

of experience and knowledge by appropriate means and may become immensely rich in contents. But by the very nature of its constitution it must move within a *closed* sphere, it must be bound by spatial, temporal, and relativist conditions, it must be dependent upon sense-experience and governed by the principles and methods of formal and material logic. The Infinite, Eternal, Absolute Truth may be to it a matter of abstract speculation, but never an object of direct experience and, therefore, never a positive reality. What is above the limitations of time, space, and relativity always attracts the intellect and exercises an inexplicable influence upon it in its quest of Truth; but at every stage of its onward march that ultimate Object of its quest remains to it an unknown and possibly unknowable Beyond. It speculates on the nature of the Beyond and forms various conceptions about It; but with whatever earnestness and sincerity it may try to conceive the Beyond, its conceptions, constituted of the categories of the understanding, necessarily fall within the domain of space, time, and relativity, and hence the Beyond remains ever Beyond, its conceptions, constituted of the philosophy which are the systematized expressions of man's ever-progressive intellectual consciousness, always find themselves beyond their depths, when attempting to form a well-defined conception of what is beyond the closed domain of the finite, the temporal and the relative. They are unable either to deny the Infinite, the Eternal, and the Absolute, or positively to affirm It.

The rational intellect, however, represents a stage of self-manifestation of the dynamic human consciousness—undoubtedly a highly refined and glorious stage in relation to the spatial, temporal, and relative objective world. But it has the inherent capacity to transcend this stage. It is above this stage that the consciousness truly realizes itself—realizes its own transcendent universal self-luminous and all-illuminating character. A person, in whom the consciousness transcends the intellectual

stage and experiences itself as above all limitations and hence identifies itself with the Infinite, Eternal, Absolute Reality, is known to be a saint in the true sense of the term. In his inner consciousness he transcends his individuality and becomes universal. His consciousness attains a state, in which all intellectual consciousness constituting the individualities of all individuals of all times and places appear to be particularized self-manifestations of the same one infinite eternal absolute self-luminous self-revealing consciousness. He, therefore, finds himself in all and all in himself. In the highest stage of his experience all differences between himself and others and even the differences between himself and the objective world-order disappear. All existences of the world are realized as existing in, by, and for the same universal Consciousness—*satram khalu idam Brahma*. This is the spiritual realization of a saint.

It is to be remembered that true sainthood does not consist in austerity for the sake of austerity, or in renunciation for the sake of renunciation, or in the acquisition of miraculous powers or occult knowledge, or in complete indifference to all the affairs of the world, or any such sort of things. Sainthood means the liberation of the consciousness from all kinds of egoistic desires and passions, from all kinds of weakness and cowardice, all kinds of bias and prejudices, all kinds of narrowness and hatred, all kinds of dogmatism and intolerance, all kinds of physical and mental impurities. It means the liberation of the consciousness from the bondage of the body and the senses and the mind and the intellect. It means freedom from attachment and aversion, from self-identification with any particular family, or particular community, or particular race, or nation, attended with a sense of hostility or rivalry towards other families, or communities, or races, or nations. All these, however, are the negative characteristics of a saint. Positively speaking, a saint is one who, having conquered all the individualistic propensities and weaknesses and limitations of his senses

and mind, concentrates all the energy of his consciousness for transcending the closed domain of intellectual experience and knowledge and realizing within himself the Infinite, Eternal, Absolute Reality behind and beyond and pervading all the diversities of the spatial, temporal, relative phenomenal world. He attains true sainthood when he inwardly experiences the spiritual unity of himself and the world in the universal Consciousness. In this spiritual experience he realizes the Truth of himself, the truth of humanity, the Truth of all the forces and phenomena of the objective world. Until and unless this Truth-realization is achieved, no austerity, no renunciation, no miraculous power, no hypnotizing influence upon the minds and hearts of numbers of blind admirers, can make a person worthy of being regarded as a true saint.

Now, when a saint, after having, in the transcendent state of his consciousness, realized the spiritual unity of all the finite temporal relative realities of the universe, comes down to the plane of intellect and action, he becomes a fountain of a superior type of practical wisdom to the people of the society. His mind and heart are illumined by the light of his spiritual experience. He brings the Divine message—the message of the spiritual unity of all apparent diversities—the message of the Absolute Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Bliss—to the empirical consciousness of the people imprisoned in the world of finitude, transitoriness, and relativity, and suffering from various kinds of wants and imperfections and sorrows and mutual antagonisms. He shines in society as a connecting link between the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, the relative and the Absolute, between the world of bondage and the world of freedom, the world of sorrow and the world of joy.

The highest ideas and ideals, which are exercising the most elevating and ennobling influence upon the minds and hearts of the people all the world over, have been imbibed from the lives and teachings of saints. It is

from them that the people have learnt to think of one God, one universe, one humanity, one Life pervading all the varieties of creation. They have taught the people to think that Spirit is more real than matter, that unity is more real than differences, that love is more powerful than hatred, that the spiritual interest of human life is more valuable than the material interest. They have infused into our minds the idea that the spiritual good of life is infinite and eternal, while the material goods are all finite and transitory, and that the spiritual good can be attained through the voluntary sacrifice of the material goods in the loving service of the fellow-beings and the realization of the spiritual unity of all phenomenal existences. It is from the saints that people have obtained the message of universal love, universal fellow-feeling and universal sympathy, the message of selfless service, self-offering sacrifices, the return of good for evil, the return of sweetness for harshness. Love and non violence, peace and harmony, equality and fraternity, service and sacrifice, respect for the freedom of the self and others, regard for the comforts and feelings of others, which the saints practise in their own lives and preach to their fellowmen and which they want to be the guiding principles of all social conduct, admit of no restriction on the ground of caste, or creed, or nationality, or racial difference. They proclaim that the unrestricted practice of these virtues is necessary for every man for the realization of his true self, for the fulfilment of the essential demand of his own spiritual nature.

Saints liberate morality from social custom, and religion from sectarianism and communalism, and raise them to the plane of universal morality and universal religion. Under their inspiration people become necessarily peace-loving, inasmuch as they learn to look upon all men as their brothers, as the children of the same Divine Father, as the finite embodiments of the One Spirit. All selfish propensities, all hostile tendencies, all hatred and fear, all conflicts of interests, all competitions and

rivalries (whether individual or collective) they regard as born of Ignorance, ignorance about the true character of the self, the true interest of the self, the true good of human life. They seek for emancipating themselves and their fellow-beings from this ignorance and for the realization in this world of the universal spiritual character of the self, through contemplation, all-embracing love, and worshipful service. Their knowledge, their works, their emotions, and sentiments are all cultivated with this spiritual end in view.

All the aspects of Indian culture are saturated with such spiritual idealism. Indian literature and arts, Indian politics and economics, Indian social system and educational policy, the common life of the unsophisticated Indian masses, all reveal the spiritual influence of saints. However secular in her political self-reconstruction Modern India may try to be, she can never get rid of the spiritual influence of the long line of saints, who have been

inwardly ruling Indian life for thousands of years. It has been quite in the fitness of things that in the present age India has regained her long-lost political freedom, not under the leadership of a war-lord, or an unscrupulous tactician, but under the holy leadership of a saint, who represented in his inner and outer life the true spirit of Indian culture, the culture of saints. It was the saintliness of his character and outlook that made him a lifelong warrior, a ceaseless fighter against untruth and injustice, against organized violence and oppression and exploitation, against all forms of hatred and fear in the human society, against all kinds of evils in man's dealing with man. The establishment of peace and order, love and feeling of unity, equality and fraternity, in the whole world, was the object of all his activities. All the methods of his warfare were the applications of the spiritual law. Free India must devote her energy to regain herself, to realize India of the saints.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

*I Saw the Recording Angel* is an account of the writer's three interviews with M, the author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, at the latter's Calcutta residence in 1930. . . .

Sj. Akshaykumar Banerji's article *India And Her Saints* emphasizes the supreme role played by saints in shaping the culture and destiny of India.

### SANSKRITIC STUDIES

Prof. Louis Renou, the distinguished French Orientalist, with whom our readers are familiar, has left India for France after a tour of the country for nearly six months. His arrival in the country was very timely, and he has rendered great service to the cause of Sanskrit and our culture. We drew attention

in one of our previous issues to certain of his remarks on Sanskrit as a bond of unity among the different Indian peoples of the north and the south. He has in a great measure the characteristic gift of the French writers to put things in a simple, clear, and logical way. Just before his departure the learned Professor, who is more than a linguist and is interested in the values of culture, spoke with great understanding on the *Future of Sanskrit Studies in India* at the Nagpur University. In our eyes Sanskritic studies are of paramount importance for Indians, both for cultural and national reasons. So we have chosen again to quote portions from his valuable observations.

'India' observed the Professor 'has the good fortune of being the repository of the

noblest spiritual tradition, the only one in the whole world which has been alive throughout the centuries. The Sanskrit language, which has been the privileged instrument of this tradition, is still honoured by all, spoken or at least understood by many.

'Undoubtedly, India justly desires to become a great modern nation, well-suited to appear with an advantage in the competition of the peoples. But, I am sure she will know how to save her patrimony which has made her name specially respected and blessed.'

He then went on to refer to the amazing vitality of Sanskrit even now, and put in a strong plea for the enthusiastic cultivation of Sanskrit in the colleges and universities and other institutions of India: 'It is far from my thought to enter into the controversies regarding the national languages.' Nevertheless, I believe I can say that the leaders of the country would be better advised if they maintain Sanskrit as the language of culture, indispensable in the University teaching. It would be better also if they assure a decent status to the Pandits. It is necessary, indeed, to develop critical methods of scholarship, by aiding more effectively good institutions of research teaching the post-graduates. It is not less useful to keep in good condition this irreplaceable treasure which is the oral learning of the Pandits, who have maintained the texts and their orthodox interpretation during so many centuries in spite of so many perils.'

Professor Renou's reference to Sanskrit in connection with the national language is significant. There are doubtless difficulties in making Sanskrit, however simple, the national language, but none in making it the matrix of the same. This course is necessary for a variety of reasons of the utmost importance. Much of the prevailing prejudice against Sanskrit arises from ignorance of it and much from false analogies and wrong understanding of history. Sanskrit, as the Professor says, is the privileged instrument of the spiritual tradition common to us all, Indians. Our culture is the only one today that

lies outside the main currents of materialism. It is the only one that can lay claim to a consistent unbroken spiritual tradition. Further, it is the only one that can give a meaning to world history and a metaphysical support to our passion for social justice that is so widespread today. Finally, it alone is capable of providing a principle for transcending all difference of race and culture, which is essential to achieve unification of mankind.

Much of Sanskrit lore seems to be irretrievably lost today, but something has been and is being restored from translations in Chinese and Tibetan etc., of which the originals have vanished. Many texts and manuscripts still remain hidden in out of the way places and corners. All this requires to be brought to the fore, and this, of course, cannot be done without liberal financial help.

But the rediscovery of the texts will be only the first step in a vast project of research. The deep meaning of many of these philosophical texts generally lies beyond the comprehension of the students trained exclusively in the Western methods of scholarship. We do not for a moment deny the great value of the critical and historical methods applied to Indology. But if Indology is to be more than a mere exercise in linguistics, a wider outlook and a more informed approach to the problem is necessary. This means that the valuable elements in the traditional methods of study and understanding should be combined with the up-to-date ones. It is only thus that we will be able to fathom the depths of the Indian mind. As it is, modern scholarship, almost without exception, is oblivious of an entire dimension of Indian thought.

The Pandits of India, the Professor rightly remarks, have maintained Sanskrit scholarship through the centuries in spite of endless perils. Their help is essential in building up a new and more comprehensive tradition of Indology. In fact all that is really significant in the writings of modern authors on Indian philosophy, psychology, and so on is derived from their help. Let us be clear on this point and

give all the help we can to make the status of the traditional Pandits at least equal to that which the teachers in the modern universities

enjoy and also to enable them to become equipped with the up-to-date methods of research.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**MINKAN—THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF POSSESSING "FISH-EYES."** By the Rev. H. Heras S. J. *Hind Kūṭabs Limited, Bombay, 1947. Pp. 120 Rs. 4-8-0.*

This volume published under the auspices of the Indian Research Institute, St. Xavier's College, Bombay, is a serious attempt at elucidating the hoary text of an Indus Valley Inscription. Its rather uninviting title it owes to the expression Minkan that occurs in the body of the inscription as deciphered by the learned author. The expression on the face of it means 'one having fish-eyes.' The author reads deeper and brings out its inner meaning by referring to the episode of the *Mahabharata* which throws a flood of light on the otherwise enigmatical expression. Thus the theme develops into a highly interesting and profitable excursus of the 'secret doctrine' that is revelatory of the supreme knowledge of the Deity, conferring the final blessedness attainable by man. It is well that the author integrates this ripening of wisdom with the different stages of religious life, for the keynote of mysticism is always 'the understanding through life.' Apart from the light of spiritual discipline, the ecstatic utterances of mystics will degenerate into sheer pathological rhapsody.

In his exposition, the author makes copious use of quotations, but these are never obtrusive and inept, because his mind seems all along to be in tune with the Infinite. Again, the citations are not confined to any particular school, but are drawn from a variety of sources and the meanings of terms and expressions peculiar to different schools are evaluated and stabilized not by the ready, emasculating process of generalization that obliterates the specific differences of the moment to get at the common denominator. On the contrary, such terms and expressions are set forth against their proper context, philosophical or religious, and oriented in the light of Truth that is transcendent and self-luminous, yet appropriable and enjoyable by the devoted seeker in love and worship. A study, at once so sympathetic and critical, reveals a remarkable degree of unanimity in the utterances of mystics of different ages and climes, but this only means that all draw upon the same fundamental reality of Experience with evident claim to universal acceptance and adoration. As such, words may often differ, but once this heart of reality is grasped, it is not difficult to equate the mean-

ing to its appropriate word. In this way, the author in many instances reads meanings into texts which are not the usually accepted meanings. In so far as the truth of experience is vindicated, we may not quarrel with the author. But we can hardly agree with the author when he concludes: 'Finally, the acquisition of this supreme wisdom will make man forget himself and direct all his works and all his life to the greater glory of God. From this earthly moksa the transit to the real moksa of svarga is but natural (P 106).' So it seems that according to the author the highest stage of spiritual fruition is reached through the method of dynamic identification of wills, human and divine, making man God-like in knowledge and power. As against this, there is an impersonal expression of the transcendental will based on the identity of wills, human and divine. This is the standpoint of Advaita mysticism, which visualizes the final stage of realization as giving the taste of Absolute freedom here on earth not by way of identification of will, but by way of identity of being. The *Gita* bears eloquent testimony to this stage in the familiar words: *Thaua tar jītab svargo geshām sāṅge sthitam manah.*

MAKHANAL MUKHERJI

### BENGALI

**VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTION PATRIKA.** Edited and Published by S. Sudhansu Sekhar Bhattacharyya. *The Vivekananda Institution, 107, Khuruli Road, Howrah, Pp. 38.*

This magazine brought out every year by the boys of the Institution is a medium for the expression of their literary talents and a means to stimulate their thoughts. This issue contains many good articles on Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Aurobindo, and other great men as also other general articles and poems. It is creditable that it maintains a high standard even though the articles are contributed by the High School students. It is a joy to see such a good magazine and we hope the students of other institutions will make similar efforts. The boys can take just pride in their achievement.

**UDAYACHAL (ANNUAL).** General Editor Shri Satchidanand Dhar. Published by *Swami Lokeshwarananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, 18 Juddal Mallick Road, Calcutta 6, Pp. 68.*

*Udayachal* is coming out in print for the first time after being conducted as a quarterly manuscript magazine for about three years by the students of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Calcutta, under the

guidance of Swami Lokeshwarananda. Most of the contributors are college students, and the magazine keeps up a high standard. We wish all success to this new venture.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR ANNUAL PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

The annual prize distribution ceremony of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, was held on Feb. 25, 1949, in a beautifully decorated pandal under the presidentship of His Excellency Sri Madhab Sri Hari Aney, the Governor of Bihar. It was attended by the elite of the town. The function was a great success with concert, classical music, recitation, and drill demonstration. The Secretary's Report made all acquainted with the activities of this Residential Educational Institution. Swami Achintyananda of the Mission delivered a timely speech in Hindi which was appreciated by all. His Excellency spoke feelingly for about fifteen minutes. Most of the people, he said, are acquainted with the philanthropic activities of the Mission which was founded by Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples. He continued, 'This is one of the educational institutions conducted by the Mission. The boys who have got the rare opportunity of getting education under the able guidance of the monastic workers of the Order are, no doubt, born under a lucky star. Time has changed; education nowadays means much. It is not a question of turning out of clerks to serve the foreign rulers. It means the building up of character, the making of men who will make this country great and show light to the world. India is now independent, but it is not the achievement of one individual. It is the tradition, the *Sadhana*, we inherited from the saints and sages of this sacred land, that gave the impetus, the strength, and inspiration. The spiritual renaissance which we find in Swami Dayananda, and which we see ablaze with the advent of Swami Vivekananda, is the source that supplied the fresh life-blood to the nation. After that we find the political upheaval which found its fullest manifestation in Mahatma Gandhi, and this too has the same spiritual tradition at its root. It is not the strength of sword, but a strength much more powerful than the mightiest of modern weapons; and it is purely Indian. This force changed even the minds of the foreign rulers who were made to leave the land, but who remained friends. But freedom is not all, and we should make our country

glorious. We should look into our faults and make good of them. We should further mingle with our culture whatever good we find in foreign civilizations. We have a glorious past; we have our *Upanishads*, our *Puranas* and *Shastras* which will supply us whatever necessary for the fulfilment of the national life. Education means doing all this.'....

His Excellency went on to say, 'I am very glad that the Ramakrishna Mission is also working in this province. I have travelled far and near. I met people in Ceylon, Siam, and Malay; I had the opportunity of coming in contact with the people of foreign countries who are acquainted with the men and activities of the Mission. They all have a great regard for the Mission and its work. The door of the Mission is always open to all. They are non-sectarian. I have full faith in them. They are truly educated. They are pure and sincere, they can feel and co-operate, they are courteous and efficient. So it is a relief that these hands of workers have taken the work of education in their own hand. They will be able to rebuild the relation between the teacher and the taught, suggested by our *Shastras*, which was once lost during the serfdom of the nation. I believe that they are proceeding in the right direction, and the boys coming out of such institutions will once again make our Hindusthan great.'

His Excellency emphasized that 'the underlying meaning of education is the awakening of the eternal power lying dormant in each individual. No power is yet born that can crush the culture of Hindusthan. It is the power of *paravidya*, the spiritual education which and which alone, can make India great and save the quarrelling world from destruction. The boys should know what our *Shastras* teach. They should be made conscious of the spiritual treasure left to them by the *tapasya* of our forefathers. They should add to it. People of the foreign countries are now busy at making such weapons that can demolish the whole civilization in a moment. But the students of Hindusthan must know the power of *brahmacharya*, the force of *paravidya*, and they must acquire these if they want to save their own land and the world at large. Thus secular education based on spirituality is the only solution of the present-day problem.'

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

JULY 1949

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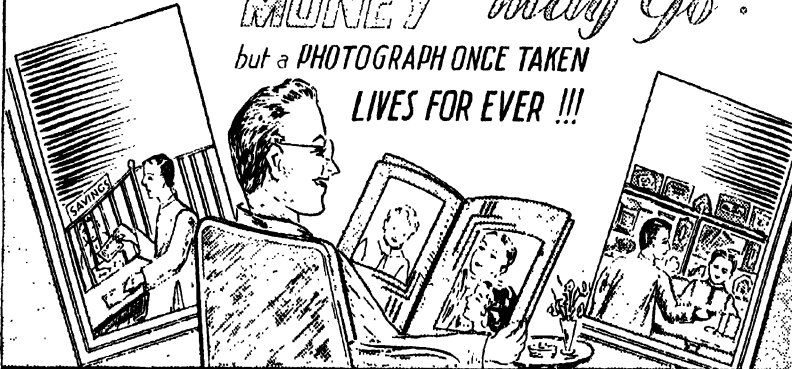
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No. 7



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य ब्रह्मनिबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Le Lundi.

Mademoiselle,

J'ai reçu votre aimable lettre et je vous remercie de votre charmante invitation. Nous comptons, le Swami et moi, quitter Paris lundi de la semaine prochaine pour vous rejoindre à Lannion. Nous vous conformons pour le train à vis bonnes indications. Nous vous télégraphierons d'ailleurs au départ. Nous espérons que ce petit retour de quatre jours ne vous causera pas de dérangement.

Le Swami et moi, nous faisons une véritable joie de vous retrouver en bonne santé et dans un beau paysage.

Veuillez, Madame, croire à mes sentiments dévoués et très respectueux,

Jules Bois

Je donna ma plume au Swami qui va écrire pour vous sa première phrase en français.....

(TRANSLATION)

Monday

Mademoiselle,

I have received your kind letter and thank you very much for your charming invitation. The Swami and I are thinking of leaving Paris on Monday, next week, to join you again in Lannion. We shall choose our train according to the best convenience possible. Moreover, we shall send you a telegram when we depart. We hope that our little visit of four days will cause you no inconvenience whatever.

The Swami and I are too happy for words to meet you again in such good health and in such a beautiful country.



Please, accept, Madame, the expression of my devotion and respect,

Jules Bois

I am handing, now, my pen to the Swami who is going to write to you his first French note.....

Ma chere Mademoiselle,

J'ai été très heureuse est très content ici. J'avais le plu bon temps apres quelque année.

Je trouve vie proper avec M. Bois, les livres, le calme et l'absence de tout ce qui m'a troublé.

Mai je ne sais pas quel destine m'attend maintenant.

Cett est drole, ma lettre, mais il est mon essai premier.

Votre fidèle,

Vivekananda

Je ne regarde pas ce qu' a ecrit le Swami, afin que ce soit plus original.

### (TRANSLATION)

My dear Mademoiselle,

I have been very happy and content here. I am having the best of times after many years. I find life here with Mr. Bois very satisfactory—the books, the calm, and the absence of everything that usually troubles me.

But I don't know what kind of destiny is waiting for me now.

My letter is funny, isn't it? But it is my first attempt.

Your faithful,

Vivekananda

I won't even look at what the Swami has written so as to make it more original.

21 West 34th Street

New York City

Dear Joe—

Experiences are gathering a bit thick round you. I am sure they will lift many a veil more.

Mr Leggett told me of your phonograph. I told him to get a few cylinders, I talk in them through somebody's phonograph and send them to Joe. To which he replied that he would buy one because 'I always do what Joe asks me to do.' I am glad there is so much of hidden poetry in his nature.

I am going today to live with the Gurnsey's as the doctor wants to watch me and cure me. I had my urine analyzed yesterday. There is neither albumen nor sugar now.

The heart they all say is only nervous. Dr Gurnsey after examining other things was feeling my pulse when suddenly Landsberg (whom they had forbidden the house) got in, and retreated immediately at seeing me. Dr Gurnsey burst out laughing and declared he would have paid that man for coming just then—for he was sure of his diagnosis of my case. The pulse before was so regu'lar but just at sight of Landsberg it almost stopped from motion. It is sure only a case of nervousness. He also advises me strongly to take Dr Helmer's

treatment. He thinks Helmer will do me a world of good—and that is just what I need now. Is not he broad ?

I expect to see the Sacred Cow today in town. I will be in New York a few days more. Helmer wants me to take three treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston he recommends me to a very good Osteo there whom he would advise on the matter.

I said a few words to Landsberg and went upstairs to Mother Gurnsey to save poor Landsberg from embarrassment.

Ever yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

### OOTACAMUND 1926

Mahapurush Maharaj came to the Nilgiris on 4 June 1926 from Madras and stayed at the *Hathiramji Math* which belonged to the abbot of Balaji Tirupathi, a very famous shrine in South India. Once before, early in May, 1924, he had come to the Nilgiris and stayed at Coonoor for some months. It was then that he laid the foundation of the Ramakrishna Ashram at Ootacamund. . . .

Since coming to Ootacamund Mahapurush Maharaj spent most of the time alone, absorbed in his own moods. Though he avoided people, the local devotees, of course, used to come every evening and receive various kinds of spiritual instructions from him. They would return home contented at heart and with his blessings. At other times he would remain sunk, as it were, in the waters of the Ocean of Consciousness-Bliss. His mind seemed every day to be drawn away more and more from the outside world, and, as days passed by, he became increasingly reserved. Whatever little talk or contact he had, was with the simple young boys and girls of the hills. Every evening, before he went out for his solitary walk, he would take with him some small change and a little food. These he would

distribute, as he walked along the road, among the local *pahari* children, and he would mix with them as if he was of their age. . . .

One day, as he was sitting alone quietly in his room, looking at the blue billowing hills in the distance through the large glass window in front, an attendant approached him anxiously, thinking, from his far-away look, that he might be ill, and questioned him about his health. Though the question disturbed the flow of his thoughts, it failed to draw an answer on the point. He only began to speak of his thoughts and mystic experiences. . . . The attendant, after having listened to all these in great wonderment, asked :

'Maharaj, shall we never have any experience of this kind ? We cannot feel the spiritual quality of the atmosphere of this place at all.'

Mahapurushji : 'Look, my child, He alone can give us these experiences. Hold on to Him, weep and pray to Him, and He will give all that is necessary in proper time. He is the Lord of the mind—the Master who is of the nature of the Supreme Self. If He turns the mind even a little in a new direction, it becomes calm and absorbed in *samadhi*, without a trace of the world, even though it were restless and turbulent like a mad elephant before. How can spiritual realities be experi-

enced unless the mind becomes very pure? And can the mind be free from all worldly trace in a day? How much spiritual practice is required for that! When the mind becomes the purest of the pure and dwells on a very high plane, then alone can all these fine realities be experienced. A pure mind alone responds to spiritual realities. The higher the plane the mind attains to, the more will it reflect great spiritual truths. The essence of it all is to achieve devotion and faith in His lotus feet. That done, everything is done.' ...

One day, a man from among a group of Malabari devotees, while praying for his blessings before taking leave, said: 'We never had the good fortune to see the Master; you are the Master in my eyes, you are my all in all.'

Listening to this, Mahapurushji affectionately replied: 'You should not say such things. He is the Lord and all in all for everybody. You must have read that the Master used to say: "The waves belong to the sea, and not the sea to the waves." I am only a servant of His who has found refuge in His feet. The Lord says in the *Gita*:

I am the Goal, the Providence, Lord,  
Witness, Support, Refuge and Friend,  
I am the Origin, I am where all is resolved  
and goes back, the Eternal Seed.

All this is God. You have found refuge in Sri Ramakrishna, the Incarnation of the Age, thanks to the great merit you acquired in previous lives, and a humble servant of His has dedicated you to His feet. You are blessed to have received the new life dedicated to the feet of the Lord. Acharya Shankara says:

Three things are rare here in this world,  
depending as they do on divine mercy, namely,  
a human birth, desire for Liberation, and the  
finding of refuge in a Realized Soul.

These three things are indeed rare, and can be had only through God's mercy. Thanks to Divine mercy, you have come into the possession of all these three rare gifts. Now dive into the ocean of His love and you will

become immortal. The Vaishnava books contain a beautiful saying: 'The mercy of all the three, the *guru*, Krishna, and the devotee of God was there, but without the mercy of one (i.e. self-effort on the part of the aspirant) the person went to pieces.' All these opportunities have come to you. Now dive deep into spiritual practices with what you have got and attain immortality. Then you will never again be faced with the puzzle of life and death.

The devotee: Bless me so that I may be absorbed by spiritual practices and be not once again caught in this net of worldly life.

Mahapurushji: It is because I bless you that I am saying so much to you. I bless you with all my heart that you may be absorbed, with all your mind and with all your heart in the meditation of the feet of the Master. My child, we have nothing to give except blessings. How can I express the delight we feel when we even so much as see a man trying to find God, or one trying to go forward in that direction? Those who want to be free from the bondage of the world and struggle with all their strength to that end are nearest to our hearts. The Master came to give Liberation to men. We are also His servants who have been given shelter at His feet—His servants in every Age. The only aim and end of our life is to help men to turn Godward and go forward towards Him. That is why the Master brought us with Him and has even now kept us here. Even to the last moment of our life we shall teach that to men, namely, how one can realize God.

This world is ephemeral. Yet, what ceaseless suffering! Despite this fleeting life, and maddened by the momentary pleasures of this world, man remains completely oblivious of the goal of life. Such is the play of the world-enchancing *maya*. Look, my child, you are still a young man. Thanks to His grace, the world has not as yet left its marks on your mind. I tell you the plain truth which is also the word of my heart.

Nothing can be had without renunciation. That is why the *Upanishad* says: 'By renunciation alone have some attained immortality.' It is only by renunciation that immortal life can be gained. Yoga and enjoyment cannot be had together. Unless the sense enjoyments of the world are given up it is impossible to taste the Bliss of Brahman. And the Master has said in the

simplest words what this world is: 'It is lust and gold which make up the world.' It will not do to give them up only outwardly, the desire for sex and gold should be given up even in the mind. Tulasidas has also said: 'Where there is *Kam* (lust), there is no *Ram*; that is to say, one must give up the desire for all worldly enjoyment, if one wants to realize God.

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (VI)

BY THE EDITOR

Indian history after the age of the Guptas is generally a period of decline, which is intimately bound up with the decadence of Buddhism. We have referred before to its great success and also to its failure. It is unfortunate but undeniable that Buddhism came to have, almost invariably, a paralyzing effect on the State machinery. It failed to provide a complete philosophy of life, or to combine necessary strength with love. Its undue and almost exclusive emphasis on one side of life stopped all outlets for normal and healthy expression. It led to political incompetence and national listlessness.

Up till now no close attention—we are not talking of vague denunciations—has been paid to this side of the question, so that it is not easy to picture the political and social disintegration which went hand in hand with Buddhistic decadence. We shall have occasion, later on, to refer to some facts in this connection. Meanwhile, certain analogies will be helpful. Consider, for example, the case of Tibet and Burma, where Buddhism has held almost exclusive sway for long centuries. The extreme morality so widely and openly professed has not been able to overcome primitive ferocity to any great extent. It has been found difficult to reconcile the religion

with the needs of politics and ordinary life. So we find there neither good politics nor good morality; we find a kind of schizophrenia running through the entire national life. Consider also the case of China and Japan. In China the people have found it necessary to combine Confucianism with Buddhism, because Buddhism pays no due regard to all the sides of life. It lacks completeness. Japan found no inspiration in Buddhism for the healthy pursuits of life; it has had to turn to Shintoism, in absence of a better philosophy, to seek nourishment for its social and political efforts. One shudders to think what would have been the condition of India if Buddhism had stayed on.

The Indian mind smouldered for long centuries before it could blaze out with a new brilliance. Heroic attempts were no doubt made, as under Harsha and the Pratiharas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas, the Pallavas and the Palas, and finally under the various Rajput kingdoms which arose on the ruins of the ancient empires, to reconstruct something in the likeness of the vanished State of the Mauryas and the Guptas. Most of the rulers are inspired by traditional ideology and look back to the past, which gives to much of their

effort the character of a retrospect. But the ideal of a universal State lay wholly beyond the range of their achievement. The political task had become increasingly difficult, not to say impossible.

The loss of balance and vigour under the negative cult of suppression and an incomplete ideal, the constant stream of invaders who went on adding new elements into the Indian population and who recklessly pulled down many things before they came to form part of a common society, the vast distances of the country and difficulties of communication, the shortsightedness and mutual rivalries of new and inexperienced ruling families, all this, besides others, led to a process of disintegration. India was kept in a state of constant turmoil for centuries, which made recovery long and difficult and fitful. The great need was for a stable political order, achieved either through a universal monarchy or an international system of States, obedient to certain common conceptions and united against foreign aggression. But conditions in and around India had become hostile to the achievement of this political aim.

It is not surprising therefore that art and literature and other marks of culture show a decline. Though the period was not without activity in these respects, there was a distinct falling off from the old standards. The productions of the time do not compare with those of the past. They are generally crude and ornate and lack the simplicity and dignity of old days. The temples and monuments have the character of restorations and not of original creation. The old rational attitude towards life and world is increasingly replaced by crude and superstitious beliefs. It is remarkable that the more ancient a text is, the more rational and lucid it is. Morals decline, social freedom contracts, and some sort of artificiality comes to replace the old simplicity and naturalness of life. A darkness gradually creeps over the land.

Yet, despite all these, civilization did not die here, as it repeatedly did in other lands.

Beneath political disorder mental life at its deepest went on. India remained constantly at her work of bringing unity out of diversity by extending the bounds of sympathy beyond the frontiers of tribe or race. The deepest insights of her culture were never lost. The true values were preserved in some part or other of her society. The flame of her life never went out completely, however strong the winds that blew from time to time. The spiritual ideal struggled constantly to find appropriate social and political expressions by making the people feel the sense of a deep unity.

Buddhism in its good old days had done great things for India and the world, but we cannot at the same time help feeling that Indian history, for over a millennium, has been, in a very important sense, one long and continuous struggle to recover from the wrong emphasis it put on an aspect of life. Everything decays in time, and a thing becomes bad, not because it is intrinsically so, but because we make a wrong use of it.

However India began slowly to recover from this negativism which seemed to paralyze life at its source. The impulse for a fresh renewal came from different and widely scattered sources. The most representative and broad and dynamic of all the moral and spiritual renovators of the age was Shankara, who belonged to the eighth century according to the generally accepted opinion. Shankara is a very important figure in Indian history, the main currents of which cannot be understood without sufficient attention to his life and teachings.

History still continues to be written with undue emphasis on the political aspects of life. This will go when mankind in general will awaken to the true ideal of civilization. The greatest benefactors of humanity have been its moral and religious innovators who have sought to achieve unification of mankind through love and spirituality. They will receive greater attention in future than they

do now. If this is true of the whole world, it is all the more true of India. But Indian history has been approached from the Western angle, and a general lament has gone forth that India has kept no record of political brigandage. We do not deny Indians should have paid greater attention to history. While this is true, the fact also reveals where we should seek the elements of Indian historical unity. Because this is not sufficiently realized, the real forces of Indian history have not properly been taken account of.

Shankara's services to India have been very great—so great, indeed, that even many who admire him most do not possess an adequate idea of it. It is also necessary to remember that his greatness does not mean that he was a lone figure or that he preached something novel. He was only representative, and he formulated for his time the broad spirit of the ancient Tradition which was superpersonal. His force, lucidity, and rationality were derived from the realization of Truth. Minus this last, he would not have made an infinitesimal fraction of the impression he did.

There is an idea, widely circulated, though Shankara himself repeatedly repudiates it, that he gave a new turn to Indian thinking and foisted a new interpretation, borrowed from Buddhism or invented by himself, upon the ancient scriptures. The West usually approaches such questions from the personal angle, or with what is called the historical sense. According to the first a great man must have to his credit an intellectual discovery which is original and was unknown before. This attitude fails to see that there can be a superpersonal Tradition, belonging to a realm other than the sensible, of which individuals are merely exponents, according to the needs and circumstances of their times. This Truth is neither of the earth nor of time, and so history can make no change in it. God is not a historical event, but we can have different conceptions of Him. All persons who have known Him in essence have had the

same experience, whether they are contemporaries or are separated by millennia. God is not an intellectual discovery.

The historical sense assumes that what comes after is better than what has gone before. Human progress, in this view, is, like the British constitution, broadening from precedent to precedent. Apart from the reason mentioned above, namely, that Truth in the ultimate sense is not of the earth or of time, to say that what comes after is better than what has gone before is an altogether indefensible proposition. All history belies it. There is no continuous progress, whether in individual or collective life. It is always a movement, sometimes going up and sometimes down. The concept of regress is not without application. Science tells us that even this visible universe will one day dissolve into invisible radiation. Viewed cosmically there is no progress at all, neither is there absolute regress. It is a see-saw. All that we can say in justification of our notion of progress is that it is merely local and temporary, which is to say that perfection is not of this world.

The Indian spiritual tradition (*sanatana dharma*) is not a religion originating with a particular person or deriving authority from a unique and uncommon revelation. It is superpersonal, revealed and periodically renewed by seers or *rishis*. Shankara belongs in this line of *rishis*. His metaphysic is traditional, though the polemic is personal and of the time. Reason has a definite place in our tradition as an aid to a correct understanding of the Truth. Shankara employed it to the limit it can reach.

He fought on a number of fronts. First there was the Buddhistic nihilism which pitted itself against all authority and made much of its logical subtleties. Shankara gave the metaphysical *coup de grace* to these logic-choppers who came to believe that they could pull down everything without themselves standing anywhere. Nihilism contradicted all our deep aspirations, it left unanswered the problem of certitude in knowledge. It thus contradicted

the Buddhist monks' discipline and way of life and the very logic on which it presumed to base itself. In those days great importance was attached to philosophical disputations. A saint therefore had to be a dialectician also to prepare the way for a true religion. Thanks to Shankara, nihilism never talked again in India.

It is the fashion today, in some quarters, constantly to charge Shankara with having preached a cult of negation and an absurd theory of *maya*. Curiously enough, these people keep silent over Buddhism. The reason for this strange behaviour lies, so far as we can see, in the fact that while Buddhism is practically dead in India and can be sentimentally admired from a distance, Shankara represents a force very much to reckon with. There is an anxiety to score over Shankara by misrepresentation. The teaching he represents goes against all romantic spirituality which draws sustenance from sonorous phrases that take the place of thought in superficial minds. These phrases, by their beauty and association, give rise to pleasant, poetic feeling-tones which become a substitute for clear thought. The temptation to water down spirituality to suit vulgar needs and to command followers is always strong. But such compromises with the truth always prove very unwholesome in the long run, however great the success may be for the time being. Truth never pays homage to society but society has to pay homage to Truth or else die.

Shankara never turned a blind eye to the facts of life as they exist, nor did he preach a cult of self-suppression. His life and activity and writings—all give the lie to this charge. There undoubtedly have been persons who misinterpreted his teaching in later times, but they were few and without authority. Shankara only preached, as Indian wisdom at its best has always said, that we should have a correct and not sentimental attitude towards life and world and view them as they are and not as they seem.

*Maya* is no creation of Shankara's brain.

It is an old conception going back to the *Rik-Samhita*. It is a plain statement of the contradictory character of our experience and of the mystery of the universe. We seek for things which we know cannot be had in this world. We have a conception of what truth should be, yet it is nowhere to be found in this relative universe. We are being continually faced by this sort of duality between aspiration and its fulfilment, without being able to know why it is so. Things are not, our analysis reveals, what they seem, yet our conduct is based on the belief that they are what they seem. This is *maya*.

Science has begun to say the same thing today. It has abandoned the search for absolute truth, for it is unattainable by its methods. Matter is only an appearance. The stuff of reality is constituted of points of force which cannot be observed but can only be pictured in terms of mathematical formulae. All that we see and feel is really a movement in the brain, which is somehow projected outside. In our attempt to get at the root of matter we return back to our self and find that it is a play of consciousness. But the whole universe seems to be out there, mysterious and inexplicable. This is *maya*.

But while science would abandon the search for absolute truth and banish our heart's desire for Perfection and Bliss as vain and elusive chimera, Vedanta says that man is not condemned to dash his head in vain against the surrounding rock of *maya*. There is a metaphysical method, which should not be confused with the logical, by which we can satisfy our irrepressible urge for Freedom, Truth, and Immortality. This superior power is known as inspiration.

Shankara follows logic up to the point it can reach. But it can, after all, go only a little distance, being limited by its own unproved assumptions. Our laws and language are just a convenient method for dealing with our experience and for the conduct of life. All that we call knowledge is only a linguistic convention for descriptive purposes. At

bottom it is all ignorance. Law and order apparently pertain to an objective universe, but all this, universe and law, is really and finally a freak of consciousness. All our proofs and methods of proof, Shankara points out, rest upon a prior fact of ignorance and a confusion of opposites, namely, the illegitimate mixing up of the Subject and object, of Consciousness and matter. There is, however, a way to get out of this circle. Reason points to a realm beyond and above itself which can be known through a process of identification. This is the true method of knowledge. The more we enquire into the nature of a law, the clearer the fact becomes that a law is essentially a statement of identity. The more comprehensive the law the more thorough-going is the statement of identity. We are said to know a thing when we refer it as a particular instance of a general law. The ideal of explanation or knowledge will be attained when we shall arrive at a law that will subsume all the facts of the universe under it. Finality in this direction will be reached when the duality between the knower and the known will be resolved in the realization of an absolute unity. Such knowledge is not a logical conclusion but a fact of experience, vouched for by those who have fulfilled the requirements of this method. Reason requires us to take a metaphysical jump. We, however, are not bold and rational enough to do this, because we remain fascinated by *maya*, by what seems but is not.

Rational life is based upon propositions of two kinds. On the one hand are the facts given through the senses, on the other are the urges and values inaccessible to them but known through feeling and spiritual inspiration. We must have hunger before the sight of food can stir us to appropriate activity. Similarly, some sort of moral compulsion lies at the back of our true ethical conduct. Reason only deals with what is given through these sources. It arranges physical facts in a system and makes use of them to serve certain ends of life. It never stops to question,

whether or not hunger or love is right, but always seeks to satisfy them. All these facts and values require a supreme conception or end to achieve a thorough integration of life. This aim is given by the insights and deliverances of Religion.

It is not rationalism to refuse to admit new dimensions of Reality beneath and above the plane of sense-perception. To do so is altogether indefensible and dogmatic. While the authority of the *Shruti* (revealed knowledge) applies to an order of Reality that is accessible neither to the senses nor to inference based on them, the scientific method is the only method of right knowledge in this world. In essence the two methods are one. *Pratyakshadi pramananupalabdhe hi vishaye ... shrutah pramanyam, na pratyakshadi vishaye* : The *Shruti* is a source of knowledge in regard to things which cannot be known through the senses and not in regard to those which can be so known.

There are thus two distinct spheres of knowledge, having distinct methods of proof. Both are necessary for intelligent living; for, if life is not to be condemned to frustration, one must sooner or later lead on to the other.

One of the things which distinguish a man from an animal is that he is able to go through a present unpleasant task for the sake of a future reward. This is the beginning of intelligent living and detachment. This capacity for detachment is as yet very little developed among us. We still fail to see that most of which we consider to be ends are in reality means to a higher fulfilment. Our end in the final analysis is neither pleasure, nor pain, nor power; it is Knowledge or Freedom. Life is a means and must lead to something beyond.

We go to a street corner to catch a bus; we get into it to reach the office; we work there to earn money; we need it to maintain ourselves and our dependents, and so on. Each item in the series, considered apart from others, is an end in itself, but viewed in relation to what comes next, it is only a means.



*Upanishad*, for instance, was composed in the sixteenth century, at the time of the Mussalman emperor Akbar.

One hundred and eight *Upanishads* are enumerated in the *Muktika Upanishad*, which is a work belonging to the tradition of the *Yajur-Veda*. Among these, the *Aitareya Upanishad* and *Kaushitaki Upanishad* belong to the *Rig-Veda*; the *Chhandogya* and *Kena*, to the *Sama-Veda*; the *Taittiriya*, *Mahanarayana*, *Katha*, *Svetashvatara*, and *Maitrayani*, to the *Black Yajur-Veda*; the *Isa* and *Brihadaranyaka*, to the *White Yajur-Veda*; and the *Mundaka*, *Prashna*, and *Mandukya*, to the *Atharva-Veda*. It may be stated, also, that these *Upanishads* belong to differing recensions of their respective *Vedas*. Thus, for instance, the *Mundaka Upanishad* belongs to the *Saunaka* recension of the *Atharva-Veda*, while the *Prashna Upanishad* belongs to the *Pippalada* recension. The *Brahma Sutras*, which is the most authoritative work on the Vedanta philosophy, has been based upon the *Aitareya*, *Taittiriya*, *Chhandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Kaushitaki*, *Katha*, *Svetashvatara*, *Mundaka*, *Prashna*, and possibly also the *Jabala Upanishad*. Shankaracharya wrote his celebrated commentaries on the *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prashna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittiriya*, *Chhandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka* and possibly also the *Svetashvatara Upanishad*. These are regarded as the major works.

The teachings of the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* constitute *Vedanta*. Three main schools of *Vedanta* exist; the Dualist, Qualified Non-dualist, and Non-dualist, their principal teachers being, respectively, Madhvacharya (A. D. 1199-1276), Ramanujacharya (A. D. 1017-1137), and Shankaracharya (A. D. 788-820). Madhvacharya has written commentaries on some of the major *Upanishads* according to Dualistic doctrines. Some of the disciples and followers of Ramanujacharya have done likewise to prove that Qualified Non-dualism is the underlying philosophy of

*Vedanta*. But neither of these systems has won such wide acceptance and prestige as that of Shankaracharya.

Shankaracharya's interpretation of the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Brahma Sutras* is the supreme Hindu contribution to the philosophical wisdom of the world. This remarkable genius appeared at a critical period of Indian history. The sun of Buddhism had already passed below the horizon. Various invading peoples, such as the Sakas, the Tartars, the Beluchis, and the Huns had entered India with their grotesque religious ideas and ceremonies and embraced Buddhism. At their hands the religion of Buddha had become greatly distorted. A Hindu revival was struggling into existence, and numerous Hindu sects, such as the old Vedic ritualists and the yogi ascetics, were asserting their contrary yet equally dogmatic views. A veritable bable was reigning in India when the youthful Shankaracharya appeared on the scene.

According to his followers this great pillar of Hinduism was the perfect embodiment of the vedic wisdom. Endowed with a keen intellect and with rare forensic powers, he courageously challenged all opponents. He cut through the cobweb of conflicting views with a direct and consistently rational interpretation of the authoritative texts, supported by his own profound spiritual experiences. Within the short span of a lifetime of only thirty-two years, he travelled the length and breadth of India, preaching his doctrines and reforming the *sannyasin* organizations. He founded four monasteries at the cardinal points of the country. And meanwhile he produced a body of literary work that includes not only his great vedantic commentaries but also many hymns addressed to the Hindu deities, through worship of whom the aspirant's heart is purified and his spirit qualified for the Knowledge of Brahman. When one considers the lofty height reached by Shankaracharya in his philosophy, and at the same time the soul-

melting love permeating his hymns, one cannot but marvel at the mighty sweep of his mind, the catholicity of his heart, and the austere purity of his intellect. He was indeed a saviour of the Hindu world.

The subject-matter of the *Upanishads* is abstruse. Unwary students easily become confused by their apparent contradictions. Therefore, from ancient times, books have been composed to explain and harmonize their mysteries. Among these the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras* are the best known. The *Gita* is compared to the life-giving milk of the great milch cow, which is the *Upanishads*; Arjuna is the calf, and Sri Krishna the milker. Sri Krishna, in His Dialogue with Arjuna, presented through the *Bhagavad Gita* the essence of the *Upanishads*. The *Brahma Sutras* (also known as the *Vedanta Sutras* and *Shariraka Sutras*) formulate the teachings of the *Upanishads* in concise aphorisms which reconcile the many apparent contradictions. Vyasa is the reputed author of these basic works. They, together with the *Upanishads*, constitute what is called the three *Prasthanas*, the canonical books, which form the foundation of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta.

Side by side with *Shruti*, or the *Vedas*, there exists another body of scriptural treatises known as *Smriti*. These works are regarded as having come into existence though human authorship. They derive their authority from the *Vedas* and include such majestic books as the *Mahabharata*, the various *Puranas*, and the *Manusmriti*. In ancient India only those people who belonged to the three upper castes were permitted to read the *Vedas*. The teachings of *Smriti*, however, were accessible to all. And they too opened the door to Liberation.

In A. D. 1650, fifty *Upanishads* were translated into Persian under the patronage of Prince Dara, the son of Shahajahan, Emperor of Delhi. From the Persian they were translated into Latin, in A. D. 1801-1802. Schopenhauer read and studied this Latin

translation and, in later years, declared: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."

### THE MEANING OF UPANISHAD

The word *Upanishad* has been derived from the root *sad*, to which are added two prefixes: *upa* and *ni*. The prefix *upa* denotes nearness, and *ni*, totality. The root *sad* means to loosen, to attain and to annihilate. Thus the etymological meaning of the word is the Knowledge, or *vidya*, which, when received from a competent teacher, loosens totally the bondage of the world, or *surely* enables the pupil to attain (i.e. realize) the Self, or completely destroys ignorance, which is responsible for the deluding appearance of the Infinite Self as the finite embodied creature. Though the word primarily signifies knowledge, yet by implication it also refers to the book that contains that knowledge. The root *sad* with the prefix *upa* also connotes the humility with which the pupil should approach the teacher.

The profound Knowledge of Brahman has been described in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the 'sovereign science'.<sup>2</sup> It was considered a profound secret and sometimes given the name of *Upanishad*.<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted that the instructions regarding Brahman were often given in short formulas also known as *Upanishads*. 'Its secret name (*Upanishad*) is *satyasya satyam*, 'the Truth of truth'.<sup>4</sup> 'Now, therefore, the instruction (about Brahman): *Neti, neti*—'Not this, not this'.<sup>5</sup> 'That Brahman is called *tadvana*, the Adorable of all; It should be worshipped by the name of *tadvana*'.<sup>6</sup> The books which contained the above-mentioned secret teachings and formulas were also called *Upanishads*.

<sup>2</sup> IX. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Chh. Up.* I. i. 10; I. xiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Br. Up.* II. i. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Br. Up.* II. iii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ke. Up.* IV. 6.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF STUDENTS

The later Vedānta teachers formulated the qualifications of the pupil entitled to study Vedānta. He must know, in a general way, the *Vedas* and their auxiliaries; must have attained purity of heart by freeing himself from sin, through an avoidance of selfish and forbidden actions as well as by the practice of daily devotions and obligatory duties, particular religious observances on special occasions, and the customary penances prescribed by religion. Further, he must discriminate between the Real and the unreal, and renounce the unreal. He must cultivate inner calmness and control of the senses, preserve the serenity of the mind and organs after they have been controlled, acquire such virtues as forbearance and concentration, and lastly, be possessed of an intense yearning for liberation from the bondages of worldly life. Such a one, and such a one alone, is qualified to receive from the teacher the profound knowledge of the *Upanishads*.

'This highest mystery of Vedānta, delivered in a previous cycle,' we read, 'should not be given to one whose passions have not been completely subdued, nor to one who is not a son or is not a pupil.'<sup>7</sup>

'A father may therefore tell that doctrine of Brahman to his eldest son or to a worthy pupil. But it should not be imparted to anybody else, even if he give the teacher the whole sea-girt earth full of treasure, for this doctrine is worth more than that. Yea, it is worth more.'<sup>8</sup>

'One must not teach this to any but a son or a pupil.'<sup>9</sup>

The custodians of the vedic culture were the members of the brahmin caste. That is why the brahmins were held in the highest esteem by every section of Hindu society.

### TESTS BY TEACHERS

Aspirants desiring the knowledge of the *Upanishads* were subjected to severe ordeals

by their preceptors. The *Katha Upanishad* describes the case of Nachiketa, who was tested in various ways by Yama, the god of death, to ascertain his fitness for the Knowledge of Brahman. He was offered horses, elephants, and cattle; children and grandchildren; rulership of the earth and many years of life; heavenly damsels and their music; and numerous other desirable things which do not fall to the lot of an ordinary mortal. But he spurned them all, understanding their transitory nature, and persisted in his prayer for the Knowledge of the Self. Pratardana was tested by Indra,<sup>10</sup> Janasruti Pautrayana by Raikva,<sup>11</sup> Aruni by Prava-hana,<sup>12</sup> Janaka by Yajnavalkya,<sup>13</sup> and Brihadratha by Sakayana.<sup>14</sup>

In the *Prashna Upanishad*<sup>15</sup> the teacher, Pippalada demanded of his six disciples that they should spend one year practising austerities, continence, and faith. 'Afterwards you may ask me any question you like; if I know the answer I shall give it to you.' The *Chhandogya Upanishad*,<sup>16</sup> in a celebrated passage, tells how the teacher Prajapati required Indra and Virochana to practise spiritual disciplines for thirty-two years. Even after that, Virochana, the king of the demons, who had not acquired the necessary purity of heart, went away satisfied with the erroneous idea that the Self was identical with the body, while Indra, the king of the gods, had to continue in the austere life of a *brahmachari* for another seventy-three years (one hundred and five in all) before he could realize the true knowledge of the Self.

### RECONCILING THE TEACHINGS OF THE UPANISHADS

One finds in the *Upanishads* various strands of thought: Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism.

<sup>10</sup> *Kau. Up.* III. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Chh. Up.* IV. i.

<sup>12</sup> *Br. Up.* VI. ii. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Br. Up.* IV. iii. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Mai. Up.* 1. 2.

<sup>15</sup> I. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> VIII. vii. 3; VIII. xi. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Svet. Up.* VI. 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Chh. Up.* III. xi. 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> *Br. Up.* VI. iii. 12.

and Non-dualism. Further, the *Upanishads* describe both the Brahman with attributes (*saguna* Brahman) and the attributeless Brahman (*nirguna* Brahman). They also deal with the disciplines of philosophical knowledge (*jnana*) divine love (*bhakti*), action (*karma*), and *yoga*. Sometimes contradictions appear. Hence the question arises as to whether the *Upanishads* present a single, consistent, coordinated system of knowledge or a mere conglomeration of unrelated ideas. The orthodox Hindu view is that the *Upanishads* are consistent, that they describe a single truth, namely, the reality of the non-dual Brahman, and furthermore, that this same truth is rendered in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*. The vedantic philosophers support this conclusion by certain accepted means of proof.

But the Western critics maintain that the *Upanishads* present inconsistent views and that conflicting doctrines may be found even in the same *Upanishad*. Such a conclusion, according to the Hindu philosophers, is the natural result of the inability of the Western Orientalists to find the thread of harmony. They place their emphasis on particular details and lack comprehension of the general trend. The subject-matter of the *Upanishads* is Brahman, the Absolute, which transcends time, space, and causality and cannot be comprehended by human thought or rendered in words. Human language and reasoning can describe and interpret sense-perceived phenomena; but Brahman is beyond their grasp. Any presentation of this subject in finite and relative human terms cannot but contain seeming contradictions. Nevertheless, this does not vitiate the Absolute Itself. Further, the Hindu philosophers admit different degrees of power of comprehension on the part of various pupils and they formulate their instructions accordingly. But such differences do not affect Brahman Itself, which is the final object of upanishadic knowledge.

### THE KSHATTRIYA INFLUENCE

A striking feature of the *Upanishads* is the part played in them by the kshatriyas, the members of the royal military caste. This fact has given rise to certain interesting speculations. The *mantra* and *brahmana* portions of the *Vedas* treat of sacrifices in which the brahmins serve as priests. They deal with ritualistic works, in which a diversity of the actor, the instruments of action, and the result is recognized, while the sacrifices themselves are performed with a view to reaping results either here on earth or in the after-world. This multiplicity of elements and ends stands in contrast to the central theme of the *Upanishads*, which is *brahmaridya*, the unitive knowledge of Brahman and the oneness of existence, and to the vedantic condemnation of sacrifices as barriers to this unitive knowledge. The seeker for the Knowledge of Brahman is told in the *Upanishads* that he must renounce all actions calculated to bring fruits and eschew all desire for happiness either on earth or in heaven. Therefore several Western writers have contended that the *Upanishads* represent a protest of the kshatriyas against the influence of the brahmins.<sup>17</sup> They contend also that the knowledge of Atman, whatever its origin, was cultivated primarily by the kshatriyas and accepted by the brahmins only later on. Hindu scholars, however, do not accept this view.

In reviewing the problem, let us first point out a few of the references to kshatriyas in the *Upanishads*.

One of the most important and ancient of the *Upanishads* now extant is the *Brihadaranyaka*, which frequently mentions an emperor of Videha whose name is Janaka. This imposing figure is described as a master of the vedic knowledge (*adhitarveda*), endowed with a keen intellect (*medhavi*), and familiar with the doctrines of the *Upanishads*. It is stated in the third

<sup>17</sup> P. Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 19. Clark, Edinburgh, 1908.

chapter that on a certain occasion this great emperor 'performed a sacrifice in which gifts were freely distributed. Vedic scholars from the Kuru and Panchala countries were assembled.' The emperor then expressed a desire to know which was 'the most erudite of these Vedic scholars.' And so he had a thousand cows confined in a pen, and on the horns of each cow were fixed ten *padas* of gold.

Janaka said to the brahmins: 'Revered brahmins, let him who is the best vedic scholar among you drive home the cows.' None of the brahmins dared to accept the challenge except the sage Yajnavalkya, who asked one of his pupils to lead the cows home. This enraged the others. The Chief priest of the court arose and said: 'Are you, then, the best vedic scholar among us?'

Yajnavalkya answered: 'I bow to the best vedic scholar. I only want the cows.'

Thereupon the other brahmins were determined to test his knowledge of Brahman. A learned debate ensued, and this was presided over by the kshattriya king.

In chapter four of the same work Yajnavalkya and the emperor Janaka again appear. This time the kshattriya is the disciple and the brahmin the preceptor. Janaka receives from Yajnavalkya the supreme Knowledge of Brahman and demonstrates his appreciation by making a suitable gift: 'I give you, sir, the empire of Videha, and myself with it, to wait upon you.'

At the conclusion of the fifth chapter, this wise emperor Janaka instructs Budila, the son of Asvatarasva, concerning the *gayatri*, a verse the knowledge of which consumes a man's sins and makes him 'pure, cleansed, undecaying, and immortal.'

Pravahana Jaivali, another kshattriya king, appears in the eighth section of the first chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, where he is described as teaching the secret of the *udgilha*, discussed in the *Sama-Veda*. He appears again in the third section of the fifth chapter of the same *Upanishad*, where he plays a more important role. In this case, the sage Aruni's son, Svetaketu, is having an

interview with the king, and the king asks him if he has been instructed by his father. The youth replies that he has received instruction; whereupon Jaivali confounds him by asking a number of questions regarding a man's departure from this world, his return, the way of the Gods, the Way of the Fathers, and the rebirth of the soul. When Svetaketu confesses that he does not know the answers, the king inquires: 'Then why did you say that you had been instructed? How could anybody who did not know these things say that he had been instructed?' Svetaketu returned to his father sorrowfully and described to him what had taken place.

Then Aruni went to the king, who said to him: 'Sir, ask as a boon such things as men possess.' The brahmin said to him, 'May such things as men possess remain with you! Repeat to me those words which you addressed to my boy.' The king was disturbed. He said to Aruni: 'Remain with me for some time.' Then he added: 'As to what you have just asked of me, sir, this knowledge has not gone to any brahmin before you. That is why, in ancient times, all over the world, the kshattriyas were the sole instructors in this knowledge.' Finally the king gave instruction to his brahmin disciple in what is known as the 'knowledge of the Five Fires,' which deals with the soul's rebirth following death. This had hitherto been a secret confined to the kshattriyas. He who acquired this knowledge, said the king, was not defiled by association with vile persons; he remained pure and clean and would gain the world of the blessed.

Section two of the sixth chapter of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* also tells of the teaching of the knowledge of the Five Fires by Pravahana Jaivali to Aruni, and in the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, chapter one, we read that the kshattriya king Chitra, belonging to the line of Garga, imparted the same knowledge to the same brahmin sage.

Let us now return to the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. In chapter two, section one, the kshattriya king of Benares, Ajatasatru, was approached by the proud brahmin Balaki,

who said : 'I will tell you about Brahman.' The king begged him to go on. Balaki described the attributes of Brahman as reflected in such subjects as the sun, the moon, lightning, akasa, the wind, fire, water, and a mirror.

'Is this all?' Ajatasatru asked.

'This is all.'

'By knowing this much one cannot know Brahman,' said the king. The brahmin was humbled. 'I approach you as a student, he said.'

'It is contrary to usage,' said that king, 'that a brahmin should approach a kshatriya with the thought that the latter might teach him about Brahman. However, I shall instruct you.' Then the kshatriya Ajatasatru taught the brahmin Balaki the oneness of jiva and Brahman by explaining the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep.

This story is repeated in the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, chapter four.

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, fifth chapter, section eleven, the story is told of five great brahmin householders, all well-versed in the *Vedas*, and another erudite brahmin, Aruni, who came to the kshatriya king Kaikeyi Asvapati for the knowledge of Vaisvanara Atman (the Universal Self). When they arrived, the king showed respect to them separately, and next morning said to his honoured guests : 'In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no brahmin without a sacrificial altar in his house, no ignorant person, and no adulterer—not to speak of adulteress. Sirs, I am about to perform a sacrifice. Please remain with me, and I shall bestow on each of you as much wealth as I should give to a priest.' They answered : 'A man should state the purpose for which he has come. At the present time, you are the one who possesses the knowledge of the Vaisvanara Atman. Please give us instruction.' 'Tomorrow,' said the king, 'I shall give you my reply.' Next morning the brahmins approached him, like disciples, carrying fuel in their hands, and received the instruction for which they had come.

One more illustration. It is told in the seventh chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* that Narada once came to the kshatriya Sanatkumara and humbly begged him for instruction. Sanatkumara said : 'Please tell me what you know ; after that I shall tell you what is beyond.' The learned Narada enumerated the subjects that he had studied. These included, among others, the *Vedas*, mythology, grammar, the science of numbers, the rules of sacrifice for the ancestors, the science of portents, logic, ethics, etymology, the science of pronunciation and prosody, the science of demons, the science of weapons, astronomy, the science of serpents, and the sciences of perfume-making, dancing, and singing. 'But sir, for all of this,' concluded Narada, 'I know only the mantras, the sacred words, and not the Self, I have been told by such men as yourself that he who knows the Self overcomes grief : I am in grief. Good sir, assist me beyond this grief.' Thereupon Sanatkumara began to lead Narada step by step, to the Knowledge of Brahman. Sanatkumara said : 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else—that is the Infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else—that is the finite. The Infinite is immortal ; the finite mortal.'<sup>18</sup> 'The Infinite,' continued the king, 'is, indeed, below, above, behind, before the right, and to the left. It is, indeed, all this.'<sup>19</sup> Thus it was that the venerable Sanatkumara revealed to Narada, when the impurities of his heart had been removed, 'that which lies beyond darkness.'<sup>20</sup>

It is apparent from all of this (and this is not by any means an exhaustive list of the possible citations) that the kshatriyas exerted a profound influence on the teachings and teachers of the *Upanishads*. They were versed in rituals, in the mysteries of rebirth, in the identity of jiva and Brahman, and in

<sup>18</sup> VII. xxiv. 1.

<sup>19</sup> VII. xxv. 1.

<sup>20</sup> VII. xxvi. 2.

the Knowledge of the Infinite, which is the culmination of the spiritual wisdom of the Indo-Aryans. This, as we have said, has led certain eminent vedic scholars of the West to conclude that the *Upanishads*, containing the Knowledge of the Self, must be a later development by the kshatriyas in reaction against the rituals and sacrifices of the *mantra* and *brahmana* portions of the *Vedas*; the brahmins, occupied solely with the details and paraphernalia of sacrifice, were ignorant of the philosophy of the Self and so had to learn Self-Knowledge from the teachers of the military caste.

Such a conclusion, however, is hardly valid. It is true, indeed, that according to Advaita Vedanta, the Knowledge of Brahman and the performance of sacrifices cannot coexist. They are incompatible. He who has realized the oneness of jiva and Brahman and the unreality of the relative world cannot participate in vedic sacrifices, the aim of which is to enable the performer to enjoy happiness in heaven. However—and this is the great point—sacrifices and the Knowledge of Brahman are meant for two different classes of aspirants. A *sannyasin*, who has experienced the transitory nature of enjoyment, is qualified for Self-Knowledge; but such enlightened ones do not constitute the major portion of society. It is the duty of others, who belong to the first three stages of life and who identify themselves with the body and mind and seek material happiness, to engage in sacrificial action. This is a basic principle, understood and taken for granted by every member of Hindu society. It is neither necessary nor possible for a *sannyasin* to perform sacrifices. To suppose that there

were among the brahmins no *sannyasins* who were endowed with Self-Knowledge would be wrong. The fact is that as there were both illumined and unillumined persons among the kshatriyas, so there were among the brahmins those who were devoted to sacrifices and also those who cultivated the Knowledge of Brahman. The passages of the *Upanishads* that condemn sacrifices and other actions cannot possibly apply to them; for they are still householders. Such passages were directed to, and can apply, to *sannyasins* alone.

As already stated, according to the vedic tradition, the Lord alone is the source of vedic knowledge. He is, indeed, the embodiment of that knowledge. At the beginning of a cycle He reveals it for the protection of creation, making it known through the pure hearts of the *rishis*. *Rishis*, according to the *Vedas*, are highly spiritual beings who attained perfection in previous cycles but have assumed human bodies in the new creation to become divine instruments for the propagation of the wisdom of the *Vedas*. Kapila, Vyasa, and Vasishtha belong to this number. Then, as time goes on, the vedic knowledge becomes disseminated through a succession of competent teachers. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* supplies several genealogical tables of such Vedic seers.<sup>21</sup>

There were a number of kshatriyas among the *rishis*, and the brahmins, eager to acquire their knowledge, accepted discipleship under them, in accordance with the well-known Hindu maxim that a superior knowledge should be learnt even from a person of inferior rank.

(To be continued)

<sup>21</sup> *Br. Up.* II. vi; IV. vi; VI. v.

'The Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE PROBLEM OF MORAL EVIL; A VEDANTIC APPROACH

BY PRABAS JIBAN CHOWDHURY

Western idealism has shown great insight into the problem of moral evil, whose several characteristics it has ably brought out. But it has not been able to reach a convincing solution of the problem for want of an adequate metaphysic of the soul. Rather, if consistently worked out, it lands us in embarrassing contradictions. We propose to discuss this problem of moral evil or sin and to advance a solution of it based on an interpretation of Vedanta.

Western idealism (e.g. that of Bosanquet and Royce) has brought to light several basic principles of moral evil. They have a *prima facie* plausibility, and are more or less universally accepted in modern philosophy. They are as follows: (1) Moral evil is due to the finite-infinite nature of man: his self is torn between its present and the transcendence of the present, having its reach beyond its grasp, its content beyond its existence. (2) The nature of man being essentially finite-infinite, moral evil is inevitable. All men, regardless of their moral qualities, are sinners. The doctrine of original sin is defended implicitly by Western idealism (and also explicitly by Royce). Sin is variously regarded as erroneously absolutizing the finite self, as limited response to the communications we receive from our higher self which is infinite consciousness, and as rebellious self-will. All these are but various ways of conceiving the same subject-matter, and resolve into the self-same basic conception of sin as confusing the limited with the unlimited, a relative good with the absolute one. And it is natural to suppose that whatever progress the self may make there must be some degree of finiteness, that all response must be accompanied by some limit, and all self-surrender by some consciousness of it, all consciences by some conscientiousness. So

that sin is an inevitable corollary of the finite-infinite status of man. (3) From this it follows that good is interpenetrated by evil, a finite good is finite evil when it appears as absolute good; anything short of the Absolute or the Infinite is tainted with imperfection. (4) Lastly, the inevitability of moral evil jeopardizes moral responsibility.

But it is precisely here that Western idealism is most vulnerable. For man cannot, by any amount of rationalization, really shake off moral responsibility. He feels this to be an undeniable consequence of his moral freedom which he cannot disown without self-contradiction. There are the facts of his ethical speculation with the distinction between 'is' and 'ought', of choice of some rules of conduct amongst a number of alternatives, and of his self-repentance and self-reproach: in the face of these any inclination to deny the freedom of the self must be called perverted.

Yet the inevitability of sin follows from the finite-infinite nature of the human self, and to abandon the former entails a thorough over-hauling of the Western idealist's version of moral evil. To this last mentioned task we now apply our modest efforts.

The principles regarding moral evil as laid down by Western idealism are but half-truths. Man is not finite-infinite, eternally torn between finite existence and infinite essence, he is not two (finite and infinite) at the same time and in the same plane of reality. He is an individual finite self, and he eternally appears to be such only when he, under the sway of cosmic illusion (*maya*), adopts an individualistic outlook and, so, sees multiplicity and difference where in reality there is but identity. He can at any moment (of course, depending upon his self-culture or *sadhana*) transcend his finitude and individuality and



become identified with the 'One without a second', the Absolute. From this place his former being, tainted with individuality, imperfection and sin, will appear to be an unintelligible dream that is no more. His past individuality cannot be denied to have appeared, but because it now appears to be an object (you), while the real self is to be understood only as a subject (I), it must be accepted as an illusory presentation. Moreover, it is not a mere individual appearance like the appearance of a snake in a rope, for to correct the latter we but posit an objective world, while to correct the former we have to realize the illusoriness of Objectivity itself, that is, of the individual (the objectified self) and the entire world of which it is the reference-point. Thus the individual is the result of a cosmic illusion. Moreover, individuality cannot be asserted either as real or as unreal. It cannot be asserted as real when it is transcended and seen as an appearance, and it cannot be asserted as unreal for to do this one has to be an individual to see the unreality of individuality. For this reason the cosmic principle of illusion (*maya*) is called *anirvachya*, unassertible. This is the principle of individuality, also the principle of ignorance.

But rational philosophy may refuse to accept a state of being of the self in which the individual self is said to appear as an illusory presentation no longer admitted as real nor asserted as unreal, but only rejected as a false shadow-show created by the undifferentiated self to beguile itself. We will put forward the following pleas in favour of our (i.e. vedantic) thesis regarding the reality of an undifferentiated transcendent Self and the illusoriness of the individual one. (1) This may be accepted on the authority of the mystics of all countries (including the upanishadic *rishis*) who claim to have experienced this state of highest being. (2) This may be first granted as a hypothesis which will gain truth-value as it succeeds in

solving various problems of philosophy (ethics, aesthetics, cosmology etc.). We shall presently show that the hypothesis of an unindividual Self and of an individual self, regarded only as illusory, solves our problem of moral evil. (3) An analysis of moral consciousness in repentance indicates the possible reality of a higher Self transcending and subsuming the lower individual one. In repentance the Self regards with wonder and dismay its past self as an individual, an object to be addressed as 'you' while his real self is regarded as the subject. Yet the past self is not a dead object, it is believed to be somehow 'I', tinged with subjectivity. Thus the past self, the individual, is at once an object and a subject, 'you' and 'I'. This contradiction makes the individual an illusory object; the repentant self is the unindividual Self that is 'I' (subject) and never 'you' (object). The individual and its activities are regarded as false appearances, not to be taken as real yet not assertable as unreal. (For they did appear and are not as unreal as sky-lotus). Thus there is a state of spiritual consciousness which points to the possibility of transcending permanently individuality and its accompanying finitude and imperfection.

So that man is not finite-infinite in the sense that there is waged in him a conflict between the two poles of this being; rather he is essentially infinite and illusorily finite. There is no conflict in him for the two do not exist together in the same plane of reality. Instead of a conflict there is a kind of alternation in him, sudden lapse from the state of absolute being and sudden awakening into the latter. All conflict is in the plane of individuality, differentiation, and finitude; in the absolute Self there is but identity, not a harmony of the opposites.

This explains why moral evil may not be inevitable. It is inevitable only when man considers himself an individual, that is, erroneously absolutizes the finite. For as an individual he will attribute his sin to indivi-

duality which, however enlarged through sympathy and altruism, falls short of absolute universality and which is accompanied by limit, self-will, and conscientiousness (i.e. ego-sense, *ahankara*). But man may as well consider himself to be, and realize through appropriate self-discipline (*yoga-sadhana*), infinite, undifferentiated consciousness, eternally free and unaware of any limit or bondage. Its so-called lapse into individuality is but free illusory creation by magic-power (*maya-shakti*). It is only the individual who regards his individuality as real; the unindividual magician, Brahman or Self, does not take them for reality. And the magic-power is no restriction of His being. (It may be remarked that Brahman as wielding *maya-shakti* is *Isvara* (*Mayadhisha*), while Brahman itself is to be conceived without any reference to anything else than Brahman).

Thus moral evil is not absolutely inevitable. It is only inevitable so long as we choose to remain forgetful of our essential infinitude and suffer, as individuals, bondage and unrest (pleasure-pain). And since the inevitability of sin is not absolute, moral responsibility is not jeopardized. The individual, as an individual, is certainly fully responsible for his immorality. In fact the repentant self, though wondering how it could be that he at all sinned and though alienating his past self as a miserable appearance, yet takes full responsibility of his sin. For he finds the past self, the individual object (you) still somehow tinged with subjectivity and so somehow belonging to him.

In moral consciousness there is a meeting of the two selves. The absolute Self witnesses the individual self with wonder and pity. But the individuality is not altogether disowned, the punishment due to it is entertained. The punished self is, however, again the individual self, the witnessing self is the judge and administrator of punishment. The embodied self is the accused, and it is always an object that is still somehow the

subject, a given contradiction, an appearance. In repentance, self-reproach, and acceptance of some punishment the sinner's soul is one with the 'universal soul' (as the stoics say) or the Absolute Lord (*Isvara* of Vedanta), who is but Brahman shining against, welding, and contemplating, *maya*. This is the basis of the exaltation of confession and repentance in Christianity which has not explicated it with the help of an elaborate metaphysics of the soul such as Vedanta presents us.

Thus we find that Vedanta can explain moral evil by doing justice to all the facts of the case, viz. our apparent finite-infinite nature appearing as the ground of moral evil, the apparent universality and inevitability of moral evil, our feeling of moral responsibility as individuals and denial of it as the unindividual self.

Another fact which Vedanta takes care of and which is recognized by Western idealism is the interpenetration of good and evil. For Western idealism any actual good is limited and falls short of the absolute good, so that there is an imperfection and a tension between actuality and ideality. For Vedanta any actual good is determinate belonging to the world of multiplicity and difference, and, so, is but *maya*. Any actual good has a background of evil over against which it stands as the other; while in absolute good there is no such contrast, it being the undifferentiated Being without name and form. Vedanta offers a far deeper and sounder metaphysical explanation of interpenetration of good and evil than does Western idealism. For while the latter view cannot quite forbid a conception of infinitely progressing good approaching asymptotically to the absolute good, the former does so forbid. The reason is that Vedanta (of course we mean Advaita Vedanta throughout) stands for an uncompromising monism, and admits no continuity of the one with the many, of Brahman with the world. They are altogether two different planes of reality with no empirically causal connection

between them. But Western idealism offers a qualified monism where the Absolute spirit is said somehow to embrace and harmonize the many. The Absolute of Advaita Vedanta is an abstract identity, while that of Western idealism is a concrete universal. As a result of this there is no scope for a continuous passage from relative good to the absolute one in Vedanta. One has to forsake all thought of worldly good and its reward, of virtue and moral merit, in order to realize the absolute good that is but his true Self. Thus the interpenetration of good and evil conceived here is more fundamental than that conceived in Western idealism, which admits a progressive approach towards the absolute from the relative. If individuality is regarded as the principle of moral evil, Western idealism conceives the possibility of a development of this individuality towards greater and greater comprehensiveness to reach an ideal state of being where it harmonizes all multiplicity. But Vedanta, though it does not deny a development of the individual in comprehensiveness, tells us that this is not the highroad to the Absolute. We

are not to court and compromise with multiplicity keeping our individuality (ego or *ahankara*) intact, rather we have to forsake all multiplicity as well as our individuality in one single momentous spiritual act realizing them to be but false shows that veil and distort the self-identical Brahman that is our Self. The Vedanta shows a firmer and clearer grasp of the truth regarding so-called moral progress and exposes its limitation and relative futility with a greater boldness than does Western idealism.

Thus we see that Vedanta has dug deeper into the problem of moral evil than Western idealism has been able to do so far, and the solution of the problem advanced on the basis of Vedanta is far more comprehensive than that offered by the other school.\*

\*I am to some extent indebted to Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya's essay 'Advaitavada and its Spiritual Significance' (in the *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I) for my interpretation of moral consciousness in repentance and *oi maya*. I am also indebted to Prof. Paul Ramsay's essay 'Idealistic view of Moral Evil' (in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, June, 1946) for providing me with an insight into the principal merits and demerits of Western idealistic theory of moral evil.

## EXISTENTIALISM

BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA

Existentialism, as a school of thought, is inclusive of theistic Thomism and the atheistic views of such men as Heidegger and Sartre. Its range seems to be contradictory from the rational point of view; yet this school provokes considerable thinking on the part of modern theologians and philosophers. The Danish thinker, Sren Kierkegaard, is regarded as the founder of this movement. However, Christian Aristotelians definitely seem also to be existentialists. In the fourth and fifth centuries, St. Augustine emphasized

the intuitive apprehension of God's essence as prior to the assertion of His existence. On the other hand, St. Thomas Aquinas states that human knowledge, based on sensuous experiences through the method of induction and abstraction, leads to ultimate intuitive awareness of the eternal truth, God. It is a fact that St. Thomas is not himself called an existentialist. Nevertheless, neo-scholastic thinkers and philosophers, like Father Phelan and Father Renard, who participated in a recent conference of Catholic philosophers, do

not hesitate to associate existentialism with St. Thomas. It is true that Thomistic existentialism is quite different from that of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Jaspers, and Marcel. We must admit that there is a wide gap between the views of even these thinkers which cannot be bridged. However, the modern existentialists, all agree that 'existence is prior to essence.'

The ideas of Kierkegaard have influenced the minds of great theologians like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr. These theologians, followers of Kierkegaard, are in turn influencing the thought of many of the young religious leaders in Christendom. So it is very important that we evaluate his ideas.

Properly speaking, Kierkegaard's discussions and writings cannot be called a system of philosophy, as he himself decries the very idea of system as incompatible with existence. To him, existence is temporal. He says :

System and finality correspond to one another, but existence is precisely the opposite of finality. It may be seen, from a purely abstract point of view, that system and existence are incapable of being thought together; because in order to think existence at all, systematic thought must think it as abrogated, and hence as not existing.<sup>1</sup>

He admits that there is a paradox when he tries to view the problems of life 'eternally, divinely, or theocentrically.' He is clear in saying that he is not in a position to contemplate either 'eternally, divinely, or theocentrically' and he is satisfied with existing. If this be true, we wonder how this Danish scholar can be regarded a philosopher. He is indeed a great theologian in his assertions of certain doctrines and craving for God. So he declares that 'existence itself is

a system—for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit.'<sup>2</sup> He is also an acute psychologist; but he is hardly a philosopher.

Hegel showed that truth lies in the whole. Every experience is a particular of the whole and the whole is incomplete unless everything is included. Anything short of the whole is inadequate. On the other hand, Kierkegaard emphasized that the individual is not related to this abstract whole; he is related, rather, to the divine Being who excites his feelings. Kierkegaard revolted against the Hegelian concept of being and the Hegelian Absolute. In fact, he felt that Hegel and his followers were living in a dream world of speculation and they were neglecting the soul. So he wanted to place the particular human fact first, as prior to pure being or pure essence. To him, existential dialectic is chiefly connected with the religious setting. The existing individual is the primary object of his interest. The individual is distinct, isolated. The individual exists not from the metaphysical point of view, but each is for everyone, or every human being is for himself. According to Kierkegaard, the very thinking process or speculative philosophy depends on human existence. Thoughts are transmitted by an existent human being to another existent human being. He cannot forget that he is primarily existent, not a mere instance of general humanity, as there is no such thing at all.

Kierkegaard makes a contrast between man and God on the basis of falsity and truth. According to him, the very nature of man is untruth. He says :

The teacher is God Himself, who acting as occasion gives occasion to the learner's being reminded that he is untruth, by his own fault. But this condition, to be untruth and to be it by one's own fault, what can we call it? Let us call it sin.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

He seems to be a lover of paradox. He tells us that every thinker, if worth anything, must have paradoxes, as love without passion is insipid. This emphasis on paradoxical thinking seems to strike at the root of ascertaining any valid truth through the very thinking process, when it consists of paradoxes.

Kierkegaard is definitely a theistic theologian, as he seriously objects to pantheism and absolutism. His objection to such conceptions of God is that they destroy the distinction between good and evil and destroy the freedom of individual existence.

Although man is sinful by his very nature, there is a hope for his redemption and there is also a possibility for his ethical life. It seems from the writings of some of Kierkegaard's followers, like Barth and Niebuhr, that man is in a completely hopeless state. But Kierkegaard impresses upon us that there is a definite purpose in ethical striving. Man's sensuous life has a meaning for his ultimate redemption. Its meaning is that he realizes its complete collapse. Then naturally he struggles through what he calls the second stage of life, namely, 'ethical striving'—a persistent striving for truth. He makes it clear that truth is not taken in a metaphysical sense but rather in an ethical sense. Man is constantly striving not for finality but for the realization of utter helplessness. Then comes the third stage of life, namely, religious awakening by what he calls a 'leap.' This leap takes place when the individual is thoroughly agonized by utter helplessness, torture, and desperation. This is what he calls 'faith.' Faith is the highest value in the religious stage of life. Love and faith are not what people ordinarily think about the subjectivity of the individual. In fact, when an individual in the consciousness of his falsity and sinfulness is severely agonized, then love and faith in his inwardness lead him to the redemptive power of God.

Kierkegaard discusses faith considerably. He states that the basis of faith is not intellectual or doctrinal but it is in the reality of the teacher, the God-man in the sense of his historical existence. He emphasizes that faith is based on reality in the particular, individual, historical existence, namely, Jesus the Christ. The greatest emphasis is on the historicity of this God-man, Jesus. We presume that the emphasis on inwardness leads one to this state. There again, we are puzzled about this very concept of inwardness. We wish that Kierkegaard and other such existentialists were clear in this matter of inwardness.

According to him, the 'work of love' is based on the love of neighbour; but love is explained by him in his own way as a duty. He is again paradoxical when he tells us that we are to love the 'nearest' one, the neighbour. We should love the man who is present now. On the other hand, he seems to be liberal in what is called 'liberal Christian love' and 'the social gospel.' However, we are afraid he gives sufficient reason, in connection with his treatment of 'Works of Love,' for his followers, like Barth and Niebuhr, to justify their attitude of relative ethics in a world full of evil. In his usual dialectic manner he gives considerable attention to the relativity of love in that chapter. He seems to feel that one should use prudence in applying the gospel of love, as his followers emphatically declared. It seems to us that there is considerable contradiction in his point of view on love of neighbour. So far as the love of God is concerned, he stresses unconditional love for Him.

It seems that Kierkegaard's whole dialectic on the 'Works of Love' is extremely confusing, in so far as the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of God on earth is concerned. His explanation of 'love thy neighbour as thyself' is, no doubt, refreshing when he says that one should love one's self in the right way without

being selfish. But we confess that his whole discussion of the doctrine of love is as confusing and misleading as is that of Niebuhr in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* and *Christianity and Power Politics*.

Kierkegaard is dead against any objective method of dealing with life. He says: 'Christianity protests every form of objectivity; it desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself.'<sup>4</sup> He seems to feel that the truth of Christianity lies in its subjectivity. He also writes that Christians should aspire to have joy in heaven. We naturally conclude from this that Christians should not expect to have any kind of joy in this world, as he and his followers are so emphatic about the utter futility of moral social order.

The writings of many of his followers make one feel the utter futility of spiritual exercises, as being the acts of sinful man. But Kierkegaard himself seems to be quite emphatic about the practice of meditation and prayer. In discussing the subjectivity of truth he states that 'the reflection of a Christian is directed to the individual's God-relationship in truth.'<sup>5</sup> He is very emphatic that without purity of heart one cannot have Christian life. Then he stresses the utility of prayer. He writes: 'For purity of heart is the very wisdom that is acquired through prayer. A man of prayer does not pore over learned books for he is the wise man whose eyes are opened when he kneels down.'<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note what he has to say about Christian life. In his own dialectic fashion he discusses the very nature of Christianity. He writes: 'Christianity has declared itself to be eternal, essential truth which has come into being in time.'<sup>7</sup> In Christianity there cannot be any immediate

relationship to God as the pagans seem to think. But his idea is that a Christian's relationship to God takes place only when there is a definite breach between him and God. It is interesting to observe that God is so elusive to man because He is the truth and He keeps man in error.

We cannot help observing his dialectic reasoning in evaluating the nature of a true Christian. He seems to think that a man who merely follows certain doctrines is not a Christian, either by acceptance of doctrine or by appropriation of ideas; a man is Christian according to what he has undergone. When a person has received the Spirit in baptism and when he knows he has received the Spirit at that time, then alone is he a Christian. He does not make it clear exactly what he means by 'receiving the Spirit,' just as he is not clear about the idea of faith, which is the basis of Christianity. It is quite conceivable that a man can act under the delusion of receiving the Spirit, as we find in many of the evangelical movements.

It is very refreshing to note that Kierkegaard does not hesitate to evaluate the theory of the church and its adherents. He is very clear that a man need not necessarily be a Christian because he belongs to a church. It is essential that he receive the Holy Spirit, as we have already mentioned.

He excels and at the same time draws admiration in his discussion of contemporaneity. He says that Christ is the pattern. To his way of thinking, to be a Christian is to be contemporary with Jesus in His sufferings, humiliation, and withal in His love and forgiveness, just as the apostles were His contemporaries. Kierkegaard's essays on *Training in Christianity* stress that Jesus is in the present; the past is not reality. Only the contemporary Jesus is real for him. So a Christian should live as a contemporary of Jesus, as Jesus stands alone outside history. If we understand Kierkegaard correctly, he

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

emphasizes in these essays a pattern of Christian living, even though many of the statements are mere assertions and are often paradoxical. It is only natural for him to make such statements, as he admits that Christianity, to him, is full of paradoxes. However, we must say that he shows a way of life in this world of 'sin.'

We cannot help wondering why these theistic existentialists, from Kierkegaard to Barth and Niebuhr, condemn the place of reason in religious life while they use the very same dialectic to state their assertions.

Kierkegaard's objection to absolutism and so-called pantheism seems inconsistent with the very reasoning process. These schools do not destroy the distinction between good and evil and freedom of the individual, as he declares. On the contrary, they also realize the existence of evil on the relative plane. They do not deny evil and do not deny the distinction between good and evil, but they declare that in the absolute state both vanish, not merely evil alone. But at the same time both exist on the relative plane. In fact, when man is immediately aware of the relative plane of existence, he is not immediately aware of the absolute state, and *vice versa*. Hindu absolutists definitely declare that one must overcome evil by good and then alone can one reach the consciousness of the all-transcending Absolute.

If existence is individual and unrelated to the whole, as opposed to the Hegelian conception, then we do not find any possibility for love. Nor do we find the basis for 'social gospel.' It is true that Kierkegaard stresses love of neighbour, yet we do not find any *raison d'être* for that love. A question may arise in the minds of his followers: how can there be any love on the part of pantheists and absolutists when they are supposed to accept the oneness of existence? A similar argument can be brought against them that they, too, do not have any basis for love of

neighbour. Our answer is that Hindu absolutists declare that the consciousness of many vanishes only when a person is established in the consciousness of One. Until then, the individual is seeking unity in variety. Consequently, the very thought of basic unity brings out love. Then again, when he is established in that state of unity, he feels the presence of oneness in variety and thereby finds the basis for love.

Emphasis on the sinfulness of man and the way of redemption as presupposing man's feeling of utter helplessness seem to be extremely discouraging and contrary to some of the utterances of Jesus, such as: 'Be ye perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect,' and 'The Kingdom of God is within.' In the course of spiritual development during the 'dark night of the soul,' some of the mystics feel their inadequacy and entirely depend at that moment on God and His love. Thereby, they realize God or attain the Kingdom of God. The concept that awareness of sinfulness is absolutely necessary for spiritual development is contrary to the life of the great Christian mystics.

Another point made by Kierkegaard bothers us very much. It is that Christian life must consist of constant agony, torture, and suffering. He throws a horrible gloom on religious life itself. On the contrary, great Christians emphasize the joy of God. Even Kierkegaard himself, as we mentioned previously, talks of 'joy in heaven.' If a man cannot expect to have the joy of God right now, how and why should he wait for a joy which is now mere words, forever future? If God is existing and Jesus is an historical personality who is present at this very moment, an individual should have the joy of Jesus, the joy of God, when he is redeemed, however sinful he may be. In other words, awareness of God through subjectivity or the 'inwardness' of Kierkegaard must create joy by being in the presence of Jesus who is

existent God.

Kierkegaard wrote a great deal in his own dialectic method to establish the belief that religious life and experiences are subjective; and he refutes the method of objectivity in religious life. We admit that 'inwardness' is necessary for the higher realization of God, so far as the objective experience of diversity of the world is concerned. Of course, it is essential that the mind be made indrawn, one-pointed, and purified. Yet, it will be an extremely narrow point of view if we wholly deny that there are experiences of God through objective realization of God as a separate existent individual. We wonder what he would say about the experiences of the apostles at the time of the ascension of Jesus. We wonder also what he would think of the experience of St. Paul on the road to Damascus. Innumerable Christian mystics, from the immediate apostles to George Fox and John Wesley, had their individual experiences of Jesus, as the 'historical God-man,' who is objective and apart from themselves. It is, however, true that mystics like Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Bernard, Eckhart, and a few others, had the realization of the unity of existence, the Absolute. The Absolute they realized is, no doubt, in some ways different from the conception of the Hegelian Absolute. Yet it is definite that their realizations included complete unity of all existences. This viewpoint is also in harmony with the vedantic conception of non-dualism. But vedantic teachers, like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, declare that there are two stages of spiritual realization. In one stage of the subject-object relationship, the devotee perceives objectively the personal aspect of God; in the other, the subject and object, namely, the existent individual and the Godhead, are completely unified. What remains is Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. So we are compelled to say that

Kierkegaard's 'inwardness' seems to be incomplete, in view of the experiences of the great spiritual mystics of all religions.

The existentialism of Kierkegaard is quite different from that of Heidegger and Sartre. On the other hand, the existentialism of protestant Jasper and Catholic Marcel is theistic. As we observed, according to Kierkegaard, despair and torment of mind bring an individual close to God. He renounces dreamlands of speculative fancy and remains in the tortured condition of self to find God. On the other hand, Heidegger and Sartre deny the existence of God, even though Sartre denies that he is a materialist. But it is true that all of them start their philosophy on the basis of individual existence. Sartre's dialectic of existentialism seems to us not at all convincing for the establishment of atheism. He takes it for granted that if he accepts the existence of God he must also accept the necessity of His existence. That means His existence is contradictory because it becomes self-caused. He tries to show the logical impossibility of God's existence. We wonder why God cannot be eternal without causing His own existence. Sartre seems to feel that causal determinism is absolutely necessary in all planes of existence. It is true that relative logic cannot establish the Infinite or Absolute, which is beyond the categories of the finite mind. That is also the very reason Kierkegaard declares that it is faith alone that can establish the existence of God. From the vedantic point of view, Sartre's arguments are partly right when he says that it is logically impossible to establish the existence of God, the Absolute. He is wrong when he says that even God is related to cause and effect categories. Then he goes on to say no God, therefore no essence of man. According to him there is no such thing as general humanity. Humanity is individual.



## SOVIET INDOLOGY

By A. P. BARANNIKOV

It may be said that during the Soviet regime of all the studies about the Eastern countries beyond our frontiers the most conspicuous changes have been effected in the domain of Soviet study of Indology.

Two causes may be advanced to explain this fact.

First, in the course of the last thirty years there appeared in India the movement for national emancipation; this was nourished to a great extent by the ideas of the great socialist October Revolution. As a result there was a tempestuous growth of literature in the different Indian languages. Simultaneously a wide development of philological sciences and lexicographic activities on a great scale of some of the languages of the country took place. Thus the problem of contemporary literatures and languages gained here (i.e. in Russia) special importance and evoked great general and political interest. Secondly, our pre-Revolutionary Indology which began in the nineties of the last century was so far from the real, contemporary India, that after the Revolution when the Soviet public grew much interested in the people of India, fighting for freedom, it was found impossible to continue the study in its old form.

To understand the above observations it is necessary to remember briefly the basic movements of the pre-Revolutionary Indology.

In our country the development of Indology covers a period of about one hundred and fifty years. The beginning was towards the end of the eighteenth century—almost about the same time when Indology developed in the important European countries of that period, namely, England and France.

There is, however, a cardinal difference between the conditions of the beginning of Indology in those West European countries and those in our country. At that time England and France led wars for domination of India; there the development of Indology at that time, as well as later on, stimulated

them colonially and politically. In contrast to this Russian Indology had its origin in a genuine effort to know and understand the general and peculiar culture of India.

This interest in India existed in our country from a long past and was exhibited in a series of facts. I remember two of them—the most conspicuous of all—the travels of Afansia Nikitin (1460 A.D.), who left his notes about India, and the activities of G.S. Lebedev—a musician from Yaroslav, who lived in India for about twenty-five years (1775-1799) and founded in Calcutta his own theatre. He studied Indian languages and culture, and wrote a *Colloquial Grammar of Hindusthani* (London 1801) and *Investigations into the Habits and Customs of the Indian People* (St. Petersburg, 1805).

Information about India, coming to Europe in great quantity from the end of the eighteenth century, found, by the standard of the time, very swift and wide acceptance in Russia. Thus, for example, the first translation of one of the most philosophical treatises of ancient India, *The Bhagavad Gita*, appeared in Moscow in 1788 A.D., and the first translation of the drama of Kalidasa, *Shakuntala*, was done in Moscow in 1792 A.D.

At the time when Russian Indology began we find only individual scholars, who studied primarily Sanskrit, translating the prominent literary productions of ancient India and conducting researches into comparative grammar.

Also by the year 1811, that is by the time of pointing out by Fr Bopp the kinship among the Indo-European languages, we had already begun to investigate into the relation between Sanskrit and the Russian languages. One of the treatises on this subject was published simultaneously in the French and Russian languages.<sup>1</sup>

From the forties and fifties the study about

<sup>1</sup> *Relation between Sanskrit and Russian Language—* (St. Petersburg 1811).

India became more systematized. Chairs for Sanskrit were founded in the Russian Academy of Sciences, in the Oriental Institute of St. Petersburg University, and later in Philological Faculties of different Russian Universities, such as Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Yurev, Kiev, Kharkov, and Odessa.

The Indologists of the Academy of Sciences and Oriental Institute of Leningrad University directed their attention mainly towards classical Sanskrit and the contemporary idioms of the language. Scholars of the Philological Faculties of different institutes studied not only classical Sanskrit, but its comparative aspect, which explains the fact of uniting under one chair comparative languages and Sanskrit.

Pre-Revolutionary Indology in our country developed on two foundations, linguistically and as Buddhology. Great scholars working in both these departments have left a store of rich legacy for us. The earliest attempts were linguistic and were taken up in the Academy of Sciences and the various Russian Universities. The most blazing achievement in this direction was the publishing of two Sanskrit dictionaries—one comprehensive (1852-1875) and the other abridged (1879-1889). These great publications of our Academy which organized the lexicon work were for scholars of different countries of Europe a foundation-work. They continue to be so right up to the present time for the study of Indology all over the world.

The professors of Indology of the different Russian Universities, holding also Chairs of comparative languages, made extremely important contributions in the domain of linguistics. Some of them are—Professors K. A. Kosovich, I. P. Minaev, D. N. Obeyanko Kulikovski (St Petersburg), F. F. Fostunatov (Moscow), D. N. Kudryavski (Yuriev), V. A. Bogoroditsko (Kazan), F. F. Knaner (Kiev), P. Ritter (Kharkov), A. N. Tomson (Odessa), and others.

Though Sanskrit occupied a minor position in these Chairs, still the occupants did

a series of excellent research work in Indology and wrote a few Sanskrit grammars. The founders of Scientific study about Buddhism appear to be Academician B. P. Vasilev (1818-1900), who was primarily a Sinologist, and Professor I. P. Minaev (1840-1890). Professor I. P. Minaev was an erudite scholar of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, and modern Indian languages. He published many memoirs on ancient Indian literature. Much credit is due to him for his great researches about Buddhism on scientific lines. He was also one of the first grammarians of Pali. This grammar as well as his works on the history of Buddhism were translated into the French and English languages soon after their publication. Professor I. P. Minaev was the greatest Indologist of his time. He started new lines of work in Indology.

Three reputed Indologists were students of Professor I. P. Minaev. They started their scientific work at the pre-Revolutionary period, and continued with great success after the October Revolution. These were Professor D. Kudryavski, Academician C. F. Oldenburg, and Academician F. I. Shecherbatski. Professor D. Kudryavski, specially a linguist, besides writing a Sanskrit grammar, also did much valuable research work on ancient Indian philology; among these researches that about ancient Indian customs depicted on a comparative historical basis is of great significance.

The other two students of Professor I. P. Minaev were drawn to Buddhology and they confined their researches to Buddhism, especially to the study of Buddhism of the North.

The activity of Academician C. F. Oldenburg (1889-1934) is characterized by his many-sided resourcefulness. He devoted much energy to the study of Buddhism and the influence of Indian culture on the culture of the people of Central and Far East Asia. His memoirs about Buddhist collections are valued greatly. These are the famous collections of Xara-xoto, the collector being P. K.

Kozlov. In addition, Academician C. F. Oldenburg worked assiduously for the publication of Sanskrit texts of old and medieval Indian Sanskrit literature, as well as folk-lore, history, archaeology, arts, etc.

Academician F. I. Sheherbatski (1866-1942) devoted himself to the study of Buddhism i.e. Buddhist philosophy and logic. He studied them from Sanskrit and Tibetan sources. His numerous important publications on this line—texts, translations, and research works appearing both in Russian and English, constitute a very valuable store for the history of Indian philosophy. His great work was continued by his talented pupil O. Rosenberg, whose early death was a great loss.

The Academy of Sciences published under the joint editorship of Academician C. F. Oldenburg and Academician F. I. Sheherbatski the famous series of *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, which also had the cooperation of a number of scholars from the West and East.

Besides pure scientific work our pre-Revolutionary Indology published a great number of translations and memoirs of Indian literature. The first translation from ancient Indian writings was done at the end of the eighteenth century; the tradition of translating from Sanskrit is continuing right up to the present time.

The translation of Professor Kudryavski and Professor N. O'by (*Hitopadesha*), the translation of Professor P. Rittera (*Cloud-Messenger—Meghaduta*), and of Professor Academician F. I. Sheherbatski (*The Adventure of Ten Princes—Dashakumaracharita*) are remarkable for their great merit. The last work was published in the first year of Revolution.

The first numerous works of R. Tagore and other new Indian authors belong to the pre-Revolutionary period. However, most of the pre-Revolutionary translations were not done by specialists and therefore they frequently lack proper accuracy.

Pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology,

with all its great service, suffered from great insufficiency which was due mostly to the limited opportunities of Russian science in the Czarist regime. The chief deficiencies are the following:

1. Limitation of opportunity because of the small number of pre-Revolutionary workers in the domain of Russian Indology;

2. The narrowing of the task of studying Indology when it was limited only to the philological study of ancient and medieval India.

3. Absence of any plan for scientific study of New Indian languages and literature.

The last limitation was based on an erroneous view imported from Germany. This view was accepted as the result of a leaning towards German scholarship about fifty years ago which held that the highest peak of original cultural value was Buddhism and that it was created by Indian Aryans of the pre-Muslim period of Indian history.

Thus our pre-Revolutionary Indology of the post-Muslim period completely ignored real India, her history and culture, and held that after the first conquest by the Muslims, and later by the English, the creative forces in her were completely dried up and India ceased to be Aryan. In such an understanding of the task of Indology, in the disbelief in the creative power of the great Indian people—lay the basical defect of pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology.

It is remarkable that the best representative of pre-Revolutionary Russian Indology felt the necessity of widening the task of Russian Indology and scientific study of contemporary India and her languages. This was Professor I. P. Minaev, who made three journeys to India and had a good knowledge of both the old and new Indian languages. He demanded a scientific-historical study of the Indian languages, literature, and Indian culture in general. But unfortunately at that time there was a very strong German influence in the Academy of Sciences of the St. Petersburg University, and the ideas of

Professor I. P. Minaev did not find favour there.

After the great socialistic October Revolution, unbounded opportunity dawned before Soviet Indology and other branches of Sciences. The Soviet Government, already in the first year of its existence, gave exclusive attention to the development of Oriental studies.

The decree for the creation of Oriental Institutes in Moscow and Petrograd which was signed by V. I. Lenin in 1920 refers to this matter with special stress.

The Institute of Living Oriental Languages was founded with a view to focus attention on contemporary East, and partly on contemporary India which, after the first World War, organized her fight for independence. The Soviet public followed with great sympathy this fight of the Indian people; great interest was roused in our country about the people of India, their condition of existence, and their revolutionary fight. The Russian people also grew interested in the languages and literatures of contemporary India.

This most important circumstance defined the character of new Soviet Indology. She went off from the pre-Revolutionary standard, both as regards the subject and the method of study. This was soon evident from the subsequent development of Soviet Indology :

1. In a very short time workers in the domain of Indology grew manifold.

2. Soviet Indology utilizes the Marxist-Leninist Methodology.

3. Scientific inquiry and application of methodology widened the range of subjects for the Soviet public. So, as great a number of people were attracted towards the scientific study as were attracted for studying new Indian philology, both of which were totally neglected in our country before the October Revolution.

4. Soviet Indology ceased to be simply a philological science, because our Indologists worked successfully in the domain of Indian history, Indian economics, and so on.

5. During the Soviet period intensive research work is proceeding both in the domain of Sanskrit philology and Buddhist religion.

The training of young scientists as well as the problem of New Indian philology were first attempted in the State University of Leningrad, Leningrad Oriental Institute, and Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies. Somewhat later the problem of New Indian philology was taken up by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences.

A good number of specialists in New Indian philology went out from the Leningrad Institutes. These scholars are at present working with great success in the different scientific and teaching institutions of Leningrad: Lecturer V. M. Beskrovni, Lecturer D.A. Slucikin, Lecturer V.I. Kalyanov, V.A. Novikov, I.S. Kolovkov, D.M. Goldman, A.T. Abramov; of Moscow, Lecturer M.A. Shiryayev, M.N. Sotnikov, E.M. Buikov, N.F. Gusev, P.B. Gladnischev, A.I. Sharvillov, G.P. Nikotorov, A.V. Bolshakov, I.S. Rabinovich, A.A. Kovalenkov, and others; of Tashkent, I.D. Serebryakov, and others.

Very fruitful work was also done in this line by some young students of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, among whom I may mention the name of V.S. Moskalev, B.M. Sorok, U.L. Lavrineko, and others.

The Soviet Indologists took up for teaching and scientific research work the most important languages of contemporary India, namely Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, and also one of the old languages, namely, Tamil.

Grammars and various text books have been written for the consolidation of new Indological traditions for the above mentioned languages. Help-books, short text-book dictionaries, publications of texts etc. have been undertaken zealously. In this task, besides Academician A.P. Barannikov, and Lecturer D.A. Datta—an Indian who is working in the Soviet Union for more than 25 years—young scientific workers such as Lecturer A.S. Zimin, M.N. Sotnikov, Lecturer V.M.

Beskrovni, E.M. Buikov, I.D. Serebryakov, M.I. Klyagin-Kondratov, I.S. Rabinovich, V.S. Moskalev, B.M. Sorok and others are taking active part.

With a view to lay a serious scientific foundation for the study of the different new Indian languages, the writing and publication of many scientific dictionaries of those languages have been taken up. Right up to the great patriotic war this very important item was included in the plan of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, and was progressing with great success. Unfortunately, during the time of blockade of Leningrad, the death of two young talented workers in this line (Lecturer A. S. Zimin and Lecturer V. E. Krasnodemskovo) slowed down, for the time being, the volume and tempo of these important beginnings, which possessed great and exceptional significance for the further development of Soviet Indology and for the growth of mutual understanding between the representative Soviet culture and the original Indian culture.

In addition to the work in the two above-mentioned extremely important domains of Indology, necessary for the consolidation of new sections of Indian philology and the establishment of self-supporting bases for teaching work and for conducting scientific researches, the workers of the Oriental Institute worked out a series of purely theoretical problems. The direction of scientific research work is guided by two principles, namely :

(a) By the morphological and syntactical peculiarities of the structure of the new Indian languages, which were so far neglected by both the Indian and European research workers ;

(b) The reality of certain problems for India itself, where the question of creating a National and State Language is drawing a wide general interest. This is closely bound up with the growth of national freedom movement, with special complication of fighting between the Indian Hindus and Muslims.

Subjectively, these two cover the most

important work in the domain of the Indian languages.

Here are, for example, a few linguistic problems :

(1) Complex verbs in the Indian languages ; (2) Repetition in the Indian languages ; (3) Contemporary literary Indian languages (Hindi and others) ; (4) Languages of the medieval period of India ; (5) The problem of a National Language ; (6) The problem of a State Language ; and (7) General political terminology in Indian languages and others.

Theoretical research work in Indian literature and poetry developed on a somewhat small scale. Here also it is possible to call forth some most important problems : (1) The mutual relation between the old Indian and new Indian literary tradition, (2) Short stories in contemporary Indian literature, (3) Contemporary Indian drama and so on. A few young scholars have taken up the work of research into the writings of the contemporary Hindi writer Prem Chand.

Last year some attention was diverted to Indian poetry. This found expression in the works, *The Poetry of Tulsi Das*, *The Composition of the Ramayana of Tulsi Das*, *Imagery in Indian Literature*, *Imitative Methods in Indian Poetry* and so on.

Besides the publication of scholarly theoretical works dealing primarily with the modern Indian literature, some short essays on the history of Indian literatures have also been published, for example, *New Indian Literature*, *Hindi and Urdu Literature*, etc.

Also a few translations of the most popular productions of the different new Indian languages were done. For example, *Gazeli Galiba* translated from Urdu by Khlyagin-Kondryatev, *Garden and Spring (Bagh-O-Bahar)* of Mir Amman translated by P. Orenskov, *The Story of Gangotri* by Azizuddin Ahmed translated by A.P. Barannikov, translations from Hindi *Premasagar* of Lalu ji Lala and the *Ramayana of Tulsidas* (translator A.P. Barannikov). The translation of the great novel *Premasram*, recently

written by the famous Hindi writer Prem Chaud, is nearing completion (translator V.M. Bekrovni). Besides these, translations of the short stories of Prem Chand have been done by other young Indologists, namely P. Khandrov, P. Gladnishev, and others. Besides translation from Urdu and Hindi, a good number of translations were made from Bengali, chiefly the books of Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Young Indologists like T.A. Korzin-Kryvoski, V.A. Novikov, I. Serebryakov, I. Rabinovch and others took part in these works.

In the Soviet period, the traditional section of Russian Indology began to develop side by side with new Indian philology. During this period Academician F.I. Shcherbatski made his great fundamental researches in Buddhistic philosophy and logic. Academician C.F. Oldenburg in a number of ways continued his researches in ancient Indian literature, folklore, and arts.

E. Obermiller, a student of Academician F.I. Shcherbatski was a talented worker continuing the tradition of the old Indological school. He worked on old Indian languages and had great success in the Buddhistic literature. His premature death prevented the full blooming of his capabilities.

Lecturer V.I. Kalyanov is continuing the tradition of Academician Shcherbatski. He has, in the course of a few years, successfully worked on the translation of the *Mahabharata*. He has just finished the first book of this grand Epic.

The outcome of the collective labour of all the Sanskritologists of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences appears to be a new translation of *Arthashastra*, a politico-economic treatise of ancient India.

The work of translation from the *Rigveda* is continuing. Professor B.A. Larin published a series of translation of hymns from this book.

Sanskritic studies are continuing not only in Leningrad but also in other cities of the Union, especially in Moscow. Here worked

recently the late professor R. Ya. Shor, who published a translation of *Panchatantra* and the tales of *Betal* (*Betala Panchavimsati*). In Kharkov, Professor Ritter made a fine translation of Kalidasa's poem *Meghaduta*. He also translated a good number of Sanskrit manuscripts. In Kiev, the officiating member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, M.Ya. Kalyamvich, made some fine research work in ancient Indian literature. He is now translating the elegant speeches of poet Amara. In Tiflis, Academician G. A. Axble-diani is continuing his Sanskritic studies.

These are the works of Soviet Indologists on ancient and modern Indian philology.

Indian philology which had already made a stable foundation in our country in the pre-Revolutionary time had it further deepened and widened in consequence of the application of the Marxist-Leninist methods of research. History and economics on the other hand seem to be more difficult to our Indologists. Pre-Revolutionary Indologists did not create any tradition in this line, and Soviet historians are working under difficult conditions, combating the unscientific historical conceptions of bourgeois European scholars—conceptions which had wide acceptance in pre-Revolutionary Russia.

As a result of the conflict, there has appeared in Moscow a new school of historians on India, devoted to scientific teaching and conducting research work in the domain of ancient, medieval and modern history of India. A few of them are engaged with the general problem of ancient and modern history (Lecturer D.A. Subkhin, Professor I.N. Reisner, Lecturer Ossipov, A.V. Bolshakov). Others give special attention to medieval period. (Lecturer A.A. Pronin, Candidate Historical Science K.A. Antonov). A third group continues its scientific research activity into the great problem of contemporary India (for example, Professor A.M. Dyakov—into the national question; Lecturer V.V. Balabyshovich—study of workers' movement in contemporary India). A fourth

group works on more specialized problems (for example, Lecturer N.M. Goldberg is busy with the history of mutual relation between Russia and India, Lecturer G.G. Kocharyants with the Problem of ethnology of the Marathas and so on.)

The above shows the growth of Soviet historians on India, who are capable of resolving the various problems of Indian history and the historical problems of distinct periods from the remote antiquity right up to our days.

The economic study of India is still very weakly developed among us. Almost all Indologist-economists work on the general problems of modern India: such workers are Lecturer M.I. Melman, Lecturer I.P. Baikov, and I.I. Kozlov. Professor V.M. Shtein is very active with the economic development of Eastern countries and has given much attention to contemporary India.

The study of Indian arts is making very slow progress. After the death of Academician C.F. Oldenburg there has as yet been no specialist in the history of Indian arts.

In the face of all these shortcomings, which to a great degree appear to be the result of isolation of our country from India and insufficient supply of Indian literature into the Soviet Union, Soviet Indologists have attained great success. This is partly proved by the fact that the last June Session, in Moscow, of the Humanitarian Branch of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, devoted three sittings to the study of India, and a large number of papers were read about the different aspects of Indian culture.

Soviet Indology also included the programme for the study of Gypsies. Up to the October Revolution the study of Gypsies—their language, folklore, ethnography etc. were specially neglected. Only during the Soviet period Gipsy languages began to be studied as one of the languages of the Indian language system, the speakers of which live in the Soviet Union.

In a short time, some preliminary notes

about important Gipsy dialects were prepared, especially about the dialects of south RSFR and Ukraina, which were so far unknown to science. On the basis of these notes, a series of researches were done into Gipsy dialectology (Academician A.P. Barannikov). A grammar was published and other help-books prepared for the study of the Gipsy language. A Gipsy-Russian Dictionary has been published (Professor M.V. Sergievski, A.P. Barannikov), which covers the words of both the settled and nomadic Gypsies. This is the first time that in the study of Gypsies, Ukrainian Gipsy-word-elements have found place in the dictionary.

Summing up these informations about the development of Soviet Indology during the last thirty years we come to the following conclusions:

1. A good number of Soviet Indologists—philologists, historians, and economists sprang up in a short time, who busied themselves with the study of diverse aspects of the Indian languages and the intricate and manifold ways of Indian culture.

2. Thus the difficulty of collecting materials and getting workers to handle them scientifically was overcome to a great degree. This was a great drawback and a cause of suffering for pre-Revolutionary Russian Indologists.

3. Soviet Indologists first turned their attention to the fundamental study of the modern Indian languages. At present we have Indologists, linguists, literary scholars, and specialists of almost all the important languages of Northern India.

The Moscow school of Indologist-historians are growing very successfully and they are tackling many practically important historical problems.

4. A base has thus been created for the consolidation of new Indological tradition of research work and study on different lines.

5. A good deal of original research work has been done in Indian philology and history.

6. Progress is being maintained in the

work of composing Indian dictionaries, specially in the production of a dictionary of the most important language of India, namely, Hindi.

7. The principal Gipsy dialects have been studied.

8. A serious defect of Soviet Indology seems to be an inadequate study of ancient Indian culture and of Southern India—her history, economics, language, and literature. Training specialists for these works is one of the first tasks of Soviet Indology.

At present, when diplomatic relation has been established between the Soviet Union and India, there opens a wide possibility for mutual cultural approach. The Soviet Indologist now stands on the threshold of approaching a great and honourable task of widening and deepening the research work on

Indology.

For this purpose, regular supply of extracts from Indian scientific Indology and artistic literature is of much real and practical utility.

On 15 August 1947 India received Dominion Status ; at the same time she was divided into two countries Hindustan and Pakistan. This division on religious basis was quite unexpected for those who did not follow the developments of Indian history of the last ten years. Two States, one Hindu and one Muslim, were founded ; but this singular division of the country cannot stop the fight of the people of India for full democratic resolution of the Indian problem. One of the most important tasks for our Indologist-historians appears to be the study of the forces taking part in this struggle, which the Soviet people are watching with unchanging interest.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

This issue opens with more unpublished letters of Swami Vivekananda. Two letters in French written by Jules Bois and Swami Vivekananda sitting together are given in the original as well as in translation in the hope that they will be of interest to many of our readers. . . .

The search for an absolute standard of ethics is nearly as old as the history of human speculation. Relativistic philosophy, by its very nature, rules out such a conception, but absolutistic idealism of some kind or other has also been a marked tendency of Western thought from Greek times upto our own days. It has brought to light several basic factors of evil, but has failed satisfactorily to explain the fact of moral responsibility, because it has not been able radically to remove the distinctions between a finite self and the Absolute Spirit. And if sin is constitutional to finite

human nature, as such absolutism cannot but say, then moral responsibility vanishes, at least, in theory. But it remains in fact, and remains without an explanation. It is precisely at this point that Vedanta comes with an explanation that is not only verified by the experience of mystics but has, as a hypothesis, a cogency and truth-value that is superior to the explanation offered by Western Idealism. The above has been very lucidly presented by Prabas Jiban Chaudhuri in his thought-provoking article, *The Problem of Moral Evil : A Vedantic Approach*. . . .

Whether or not it can be called a true philosophy, Existentialism is one of the prevailing intellectual fashions of the contemporary West. Kierkegaard, the Danish theological dialectician of the eighteenth century, is the founder of the movement, though at present Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Jaspers, and Marcel are the chief exponents of this school. The



movement covers a wide range of thought, from theism to atheism, but the element of unity which makes it possible to speak of it as one movement despite such contradictions is supplied by the common formula 'existence is prior to essence,' which means that all existentialists, theists and atheists, start their philosophy with the individual existence of man as a prior fact of experience and the basis of all speculation. It is a revolt against absolutism, and seems to us, at bottom and in one of its aspects, a form of assertion of the modern doctrine of individualism. There are obviously enough other roots. The theistic essays of Kierkegaard in particular have provoked much theological writings in the West in recent times which try to ground the demand for faith and a religious life of surrender to God on the fact of a separate human existence loaded with sin and helplessness. Swami Akhilananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston, USA, examines the basic ideas of Kierkegaard in his very lucid and cogent article on *Existentialism*, and also answers some of the charges against absolutism made by existentialistic dialectic. ...

Academician A. P. Barannikov is considered to be the greatest living Indologist of Russia. The article on *Soviet Indology* by him appeared originally in the Literature and Language Section of the *Journal of Academy of Sciences, USSR*, Vol. VII. Bk. I of 1948. January-February. It gives a short but complete account of Indological work in Russia right from its beginnings upto 1948. Contrary to general belief Indology did not suffer from lack of interest after the October Revolution of 1917 which established Soviet rule in Russia. Today Indological researches in Russia cover a wider field and receive a greater attention than they did at any time in the past. Though the reason for this is mostly political, closer acquaintance with India is sure to have deeper and more abiding consequences. We feel no doubt that the article will be read with great eagerness and profit by many. One

thing in the article is bound to cause great regret, we mean the reference to the Marxist-Leninist methodology as applied to Indology. This method, after all, rests upon a very weak philosophical dogma, namely, materialism. Material interpretation of history goes a long way to explain certain facts, but it wholly fails to account for the big questions of life and culture. It works within a narrow field. Material conditions have their influence on literature and morals, but to hold matter responsible for all that we think and believe is, in the long run, to put the cart before the horse. Of all subjects Indology is least suitable for the application of this method. We hope, however, that Russian science will be able to follow facts wherever they may lead, without being tied down by a dogma.

The translation has been done from the original by S. S. C. Sengupta.

#### THE PRESENT CRISIS AND OUR EDUCATION

When the last Great War was up, people felt that the world would settle down to a long period of peace once it was over. The belief was however contrary to all past lessons of history. In fact all the great wars of the past were only a prelude to more widespread and fundamental changes. Consider, for example, the Napoleonic wars which touched off the nationalistic movements in Europe and the first World War which led on to the Communistic Revolution in Russia and fascist reactions in several countries of Europe. Wars are just part of vast changes having deep historical reasons behind them.

Today, on the morrow of the last global war, we feel that a crisis is in the air. Vast changes are coming. That is certain. The question is whether or not they are going to be catastrophic.

The crisis is felt all over the world, but is viewed differently in the two ideological hemispheres into which mankind at present finds itself divided. Those who are committed

to Communism believe that it is purely economic. In their opinion unity and happiness of mankind are essentially and wholly problems of production and distribution. The whole thing, they would have us believe, hinges on how much we produce, who owns the means of production, and how the total income is shared. All this being settled aright, man will be happy and free and greedless.

In the opposite camp are people, according to whom the trouble at bottom is ethical. The world will not be set right unless we emphasize spiritual values as of central importance to civilization. A spiritual aim must inspire all attempts of social and economic reconstruction.

Men of communistic persuasion make light of religion and morality. To them all means, fair and foul, are welcome, if only they will help to realize their goal of a classless society. They fanatically believe in the dream of a hypothetical humanity, free from all restraint and want and selfishness, and also in the official dogma that the transition to the new order of things cannot but be catastrophic. Violent revolution and class war are inevitable historical necessities. Without them we cannot pass on to the new society where men are free and happy, because ownership of the means of production is joint and distribution of income is equal. Deceit, lying, and murder need not deter the communistic sectarians, for, in the final analysis, all moral values are fleeting notions derived from passing material conditions and class selfishness. They have no deeper roots than greed and economics. Even if a democratic way is open for the achievement of the communistic aim, the communists do not rely on it, on the theory that the change over is bound to be bloody and violent.

In spite of its economic objective which is desirable, Communism as a philosophy, as an economic or political theory, and as a means to the attainment of the socialistic goal, is utterly wrong and bestial. To believe in it

is to believe that villainy is a means to saintliness. This philosophy cannot succeed against the deeper realities of life and higher laws of evolution. We do not believe good will come out of evil. Hatred never produces love, nor violence peace. But this does not mean that a false philosophy may not misguide men into widespread chaos and anarchy before it is defeated by its own excesses and inherent falsity.

In the past communistic challenges led to fascist reactions, which, in theory and practice, were even more untrue and horrifying. For the time being fascism has been crushed but the combined ignore the spiritual roots of democracy. True, a host of other factors were involved in the last titanic struggle between peoples, but in the main the fight was one between two opposing ideologies, in a sense in which the first World War was not.

At present communism and democracy face each other in hostile and deadly opposition. It is likely the communistic challenge will grow more serious and provoke a more gruesome fascist response, unless the democracies take positive steps in time to solve the question of poverty and racialism from which all destructive forces in history have generally originated. If the democracies fail to achieve justice in the economic and racial fields, they will inevitably die.

Though the democratic thinkers have awakened to the moral nature of the problem, yet the democracies are still too much tied up with the past. For example, economic and other privileges and powers enjoyed by certain classes and peoples are sought to be selfishly retained. There is often a lip service to equality, without any serious attempt to make it operative beyond a circumscribed area. It has become clear in thought that concentration of economic and political power in a few hands is injurious to the general interest of the community. Yet it is difficult, in practice, to give up power. Capital remains idle, when the prospect of profit is poor. Racialism and

imperialism are not quite dead. Not only our outlook but the established system also requires change. Until we feel that we are of one family and that the happiness or misery of one of us is of practical concern for all, we shall never build up a peaceful world-order.

All this leads up to the question whether or not democracies can base themselves on a positive spiritual conception which seeks active justice in society in order to restore to man the dignity he has lost and the worth of which they speak in one voice. Change of rational change. The alternative to speedy

This problem faces mankind all around the globe. Here in India the question is daily assuming a more and more threatening aspect. There is real danger that destructive philosophies may gain ground quickly, despite our pious wishes, and plunge the whole country in chaos and gloom. The prevailing situation often makes one feel that we are on the brink of a volcano.

How can this threat be met? Not by more production and just distribution alone, nor by constant lip-service to Gandhian morality. These alone are not going to help us. We are drifting. Let us be clear on this point. The main reason is that all our efforts and protestations lack a real spiritual basis. If we sincerely believe that our troubles arise not only from wrong-doing but also from wrong-thinking, we should take adequate steps to see that our thinking is correct and rests upon a sure spiritual foundation.

Gandhian morality flowed from Mahatma's belief in God. We cannot cut out God from our life and be moral.

It seems whole generations have been nurtured in towns in a wrong atmosphere. We are going to perpetuate it further by fencing off spiritual questions from our public concerns. The most dangerous thing that can happen to a people is to divorce education from the conception of a right existence.

We expect our universities to give us leaders in society and State. But do our boys imbibe any sense of values from the institutions to which they go? Religious instruction in State schools is going to be a taboo. The reasons given do not convince us. Our belief is that this is the outcome of wrong thinking and ought to be remedied.

Unless we take positive steps to instill into the minds of our students a sense of spiritual values, we shall find increasing manifestation of disorder and immorality among them. The students will one day become leaders of the community. What can we expect of leaders who have not known the reason and value of self-control, or had an insight into the deeper realities of life? How can a student understand his country without any knowledge of the most marvellous spiritual heritage of its people?

A new word has risen to honour at our independence; we mean secularism. We are constantly harping on it without realizing what effect this negative conception is bound to have on us. We cannot just leave out God or spirituality from our colleges and schools. In this connection we quote below the striking words of Sir Walter Moberly on the subject of religious instruction in colleges from his momentous book *The Crisis in the University*, which is devoted to showing that University education in England has been a failure, since it teaches no Christian values to the students. The effect of leaving out God and spiritual questions from colleges is not so innocent as it might otherwise appear. Says Sir Walter :

'It is a fallacy that by omitting a subject you teach nothing about it. On the contrary you teach that it is to be omitted, and that it is therefore a matter of secondary importance. And you teach that not openly and explicitly, which would invite criticism; you simply take it for granted and hereby insinuate it silently, insidiously and all but irresistibly.'

This is what secularism in education will in effect mean. We do not want that schools

and colleges should be centres of evangelization of particular creeds. What we want is that religion should be put to the test of rationalism. If it cannot survive that test, let it die. Keep out fanaticism and communalism by all means from public concerns, but let us emphasize fundamental values and follow truth wheresoever it may lead.

Banishment of religion from educational institutions is bound to infect national leadership at its source. Education is not for merely earning a living, it must teach the art of living. Some means has to be found out for producing rounded students combining a sense of values with efficiency. If lecture halls are not the right places for teaching the fundamental values of life, these can be imparted in residential halls attached to the colleges and

schools or in some other ways. It will not be difficult to devise ways of doing this if we are really concerned about preserving a spiritual outlook in our society. But if we give our boys an education that has no connection with our liberal spiritual tradition, then woe betide the nation! We do not live without philosophies; the choice is always between a true one and a false one. If we cannot win over our boys to a just and rational philosophy, they will fall a victim to godless Communism. Democracy cannot survive in a secular atmosphere. It derives all its force and justification from a spiritual truth.

Those who ignore the spiritual roots of democracy are insidiously watering the plant of Communism. It is a tragedy that many do not see this.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**ESSENCE OF HINDUISM.** By SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. Published by the Beacon Press, Boston, USA. Pp. 115. Price \$1.75.

The religious spirit in India expressing itself in a relentless search after the ultimate Reality behind the phenomena, and seeking a solution to the problems of existence, has been growing unhindered for the last 7000 years or more. This spirit growing freely found varied expressions, different people approaching the problem from different points of view, without any obvious unity. Yet this mighty banian with the ramification of its various branches and offshoots has retained an unexplained unity. The necessity for systematizing this unwieldy growth, a veritable encyclopaedia of religious quest, had not been felt until recently, for the entire resources of this achievement were never before needed to be called into action to meet a powerful challenge. This challenge came in recent times from the overwhelming tide of materialism sweeping over the world. To meet this challenge it required a great seer to unite the spiritual resources of India and the world, and such a seer was born in the person of Sri Ramakrishna, whose great disciple Swami Vivekananda gave in modern times the earliest and most authoritative expression to this unity. The Swami's special contribution to India is the finding of the unity of Hinduism, the mother of all religious quests, weaving its rich tapestry round certain of its essential

features. Following him several people have worked in this line.

*The Essence of Hinduism* is one such attempt made by Swami Nikhilananda to present to the American public the essentials of Hinduism in his three lectures delivered at different times: (1) Faith for today, (2) Transformation of Western culture into a Spiritual Culture, and (3) Immortality. The author has done the job with remarkable success bringing into focus all the essentials of Hinduism, with appropriate quotations, and stringing them together in a logical sequence. He has presented the subject in the modern context and as applicable to the problems of our own days, especially the providing of a spiritual basis to the self-stultifying material civilization and showing the harmony between science and religion as conceived in Hinduism. 'In simple, clear language this book sets forth the faith which has sustained the structure of Hindu society for the past seven thousand years ... a spiritual philosophy which promotes human solidarity and brotherhood helping fulfil the dream of One World.'

The printing and get up of the book are excellent

**THE DOCTRINE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE:**  
By SRI AUROBINDO. The Arya Publishing House,  
College St., Calcutta; Pp. 88, Price Rs. 1/8.  
Passive Resistance is a weapon of the dis-

possessed for the redress of grievances, both individual and collective. In this book one finds mention of the Irish no-rent campaign, the American 'No representation, no taxation' campaign and similar other movements. But it is only during the last five or six decades that it has been discussed and formulated into a doctrine, a science. The adjective *passive* to this resistance which does not brook any injustice is a bit deceptive. It is used only in lieu of armed and violent revolutions.

The book is a collection of articles written by Sri Aurobindo on the subject in the *Vandemataram* during 1907. In these articles he sets out the theory and practice of Passive Resistance ably and boldly. Here one finds

several aspects of the *satyagraha* struggle which Gandhiji was developing in South Africa and which was later on introduced in India. Only there is a slight difference in approach to the problem. Aurobindo does not abjure the use of violent resistance at any cost and under all circumstances. He advocated passive resistance as an expediency, that is to say, as a method suitable to Indian conditions and the temperament of the people. But the writings recognize the use of any method whatever, if necessary and practicable, which would lead to the goal of independence. The doctrine is conceived here in a practical and constructive way with a high moral background.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, VIZAGAPATAM

The 114th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated here on 1st March last. There were Vedic chantings and special *pooja* in the morning and discourses on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in the evening. On Sunday the 6th March a public function was held in the evening in the Ashrama premises, when Sri Nanjundiah, Port Administrative Officer, presided. After prayer, Dr K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar of the Andhra University, Sri K. V. Ratnam, Advocate, and Swami Sarvagatananda, Secretary of the Ashrama, spoke on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. There were large congregations on both the occasions.

Dr Iyengar depicted the historical background of Sri Ramakrishna's appearance on the Indian scene. India had once been in the vanguard of civilization; but in course of time the successive invasions and conquests wrought a disastrous change. Slowly, however, the counter-movement began in the nineteenth century. Western education revived the dormant critical impulse and stimulated the desire for new creations. But this new awakening was assuming the form of a surrender to the West and the forcible suppression of India's own soul. It was at this critical juncture that Sri Ramakrishna was born to redeem the soul and make it live. Unique among saints, he was a God-intoxicated man, in whom divinity and humanity were equally manifest. His appeal was always to the *lotus* of the human heart to open out and dedicate itself to the service of God in

man, Shiva in Jiva. Dr Iyengar concluded by saying that the torch Sri Ramakrishna lighted at Dakshineswar has carried its light and life-giving beams literally to the end of the world, while his mission is being fulfilled by the band of noble souls who worthily bear his name and spread his message.

Sri K. V. Ratnam, who spoke in Telugu, emphasized God-realization as the greatest aim of life. As the *Upanishads* have so beautifully expressed it, our senses are all directed outwards and a few bold ones turn them inward to realize the Self and *amritatram*. The distractions of modern life are many, and they give us little chance for meditation. Large numbers of highly intelligent and capable scientists devote their time to the study of the external world, but few think of the Spirit. Hence there is need to emphasize the importance of the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and God-realization, and Sri Ramakrishna did this by his life and teachings, which appeal to all, irrespective of their station in life and religious beliefs.

Swami Sarvagatananda explained how Sri Ramakrishna's teachings on the harmony of religions are especially needed in India. Though the *Upanishads* had taught it long ago, it was left to him to establish it by realization. Every one can live in harmony with his neighbours and the real spirit of live and let live will be possible only when his life and teachings are fully and widely understood.

The Chairman spoke on the great part played by the disciples and followers of Sri Ramakrishna in the spreading of his noble ideas. The proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair by Dr Perraju.

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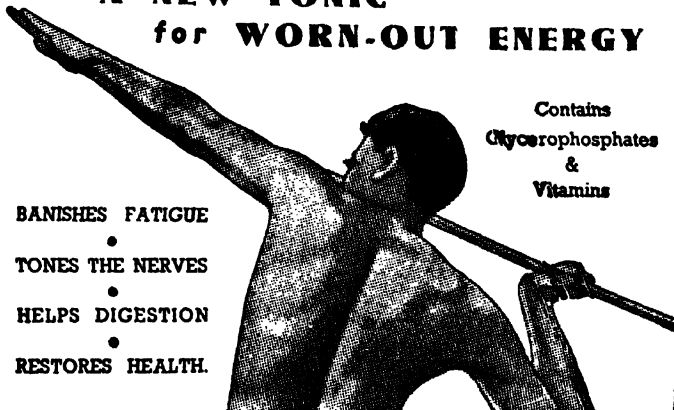
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य ब्रह्मबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELURMATH, 1932

Mahapurush Maharaj did not have much sleep in those days. Most of the time he was absorbed in deep moods. He would occasionally hum a song in a low voice ringing with deep inner joy. Sometimes he would recite verses from the scriptures like the *Upanishads*, *Gita*, *Chandi*, and *Bhagavatam*, and would then forget all his surroundings.

One night he was sitting quietly on his cot with eyes closed. It was two o'clock and a profound silence pervaded the Math. He spent a long time in this way and then began slowly to recite to himself :

*Āpuryamānam achalapratishṭham  
samudramāpah pravishanti yadvat :  
Tadvat kāmā yam pravishanti sarve  
sa shāntim āpmoti na kāmakāmi.  
Vihāya kāmān yah sarvān pumānshcharati  
niḥsprihah  
Nirmamo nirahamkārah sa shāntim  
adhigachchhati.*

When he had finished, he turned to the attendant nearby and said :

‘Do you know what it means ?’

As the latter kept silent, he himself began to say :

‘The sea into which waters are constantly flowing is always full and steady like a rock ; it never becomes agitated in the least because of them. In the same way, due to *prarabdha karma*, desires may enter the heart of a Realized Soul, who is always full like the sea and established in the Bliss of Brahman ; but his mind never becomes disturbed by these. He remains steady in Brahman, in full possession of the peace of *Kaivalya*. But a “desirer of desires” has never any peace. He who gives up all desires and remains without a sense of I and Mine, he alone attains Peace.’

‘So long as desires remain, it is not possible to attain lasting peace. And, further, root-and-branch destruction of desires is not possible without the Grace of God. The Master, by His grace, has wiped away all desires from my heart ; not a trace of them remains. Only the body remains, due to His will and for His work. I am of the nature of Freedom, Purity, and Knowledge. Often I

do not even feel that there is a body at all. Because the Master is getting His work done by this body He has preserved it until now. But remember that I have no desires. I am of the nature of the Bliss of Brahman !

So saying, he sat motionless. His countenance changed completely and he looked like another being. One felt afraid even to look at him. . . .

It was quite long before he spoke again, saying to himself :

'The Mother, by Her Grace, has given me everything. She has made me full by giving me abundantly from her store. I have nothing else to desire. I have got everything through Her grace. I have got that "gaining which one does not consider any other gain greater." . . .'

On another occasion, it was the dead of night. Mahapurushji was sitting on his cot absorbed in meditation. After a long time had passed this way, he opened his eyes once or twice, but closed them again. Suddenly, a cat which was moving on the floor mewed. Looking in the direction of the sound, he saluted the cat with folded hands. The attendant who was near did not realize at first that Mahapurushji was saluting the cat and looked at him a little doubtfully. No sooner had he done so than Mahapurushji said :

'Look ! The Master has now kept me in such a state that I see everything as Intelligence ; there is the same Intelligence in this building, bed, and animals. The difference is in name only ; at bottom they are all one. I see all this very clearly. I am not able to check this feeling in spite of much effort. All is Intelligence. The same Intelligence is shining even through this cat. All these days the Master has brought me experiences of this kind. People come and go and I talk to them because I have to ; I go through the gesture of daily duties. All this I do through the force of habit as it were. But if I lift my mind from it even a little, I find that it is all

the play of the same Intelligence everywhere. Name and form and the rest—all these belong to a very low plane of existence. If the mind rises to a plane higher than that of name and form, all is transformed into Intelligence and Bliss. These things cannot be made intelligible through speech. Only he who attains to that realization can know.'

He was going to say more, but suddenly stopped. The attendant stood motionless, in dumb amazement. . . .

Mahapurush Maharaj would very often tell his attendants emphatically that intense spiritual exertion must go hand in hand with the service of the *guru*. If the service of realized souls or association with them is not accompanied by spiritual practices, it is likely that pride or vanity may arise in the mind. At dead of night, on one occasion, he said to an attendant :

'Look, it is very good that you are serving me. The Master is very gracious to you since He is getting the service of one of His children done through you. But, my son, spiritual exertion should be combined with it. Only by regular practice of *japa*, meditation, and other spiritual exercises can you realize what the Master is in truth. Woe betide you, if you begin to look upon us from the human angle ; remember this well. Intense spiritual practice is required to achieve a divine outlook. Spiritual truths flash in the heart after it has become purified through repeated taking of God's name or continuous practice of meditation on Him. Take our own case, for example. We had seen the Master, lived with Him, and received His grace. Yet, what severe *tapasya* has He not made us go through ! Even we could not clearly realize, in the beginning, that He was God Himself and that He came down on the earth for the Liberation of mankind. Gradually, this knowledge has become ripe through spiritual practices. Of course, nothing at all has happened without His grace. But if one calls on Him yearningly and with fervour, He does

become gracious. We have gradually come to know that He was God Himself, the Lord of the Universe and the Ruler of the heavenly beings. He has, through His grace, revealed His true nature to us.

'Do *japa* at dead of night. If you do this, then you will have quick results. You will feel so much joy that you won't like to get up from your seat and leave off the *japa*. Here you have to keep awake for my service. Do *japa* as much as you can during this time. It is not always that you have something to do. This is a very good opportunity to do *japa* as much as you can—do you follow? My son, never allow time to pass uselessly. You have got to get immersed in His name; half-heartedness will not bring anything. However you practise, do it with full absorption. Then alone will you find joy. That is why the Master used to sing: "Dive, O my mind, taking the name of Kali, into the fathomless deep of the heart (which conceals rare gems)."

'You can have no joy until you are thoroughly absorbed in some work or other. He sees the heart's sincerity, he does not look at the time you devote to practice. *Japa* and meditation, done regularly, purify the mind and spiritual feeling takes firm root in the heart. They must be practised at regular hours and without a break. The Lord has said in the *Gita*: "The mind can be seized, O son of Kunti, through repeated effort and renunciation." Go on calling on Him daily; you will see that the Power of Brahman, which now sleeps, coiled up like a serpent as it were, at the base of the spine, will wake up and open the way to the Supreme Bliss. Everything will come if the Mother, whose nature is Brahman, becomes pleased. The *Chandi* says: "It is She Herself, who when pleased, grants Liberation to men." She is ever stretching Her hands to give it but

who is there to take it? If one asks of Her with a little yearning, She gives all—*Bhakti*, Liberation, and everything. You have left hearth and home for the realization of God. That is the only aim of life. See that you don't forget the real thing. Install the Master in the shrine of your heart by constant practice of *japa*, meditation, and remembrance of God. Thereafter, it will be all joy, and you will be cheerful always. All bodies must perish. Our bodies will last only a few days more. This body is very old. When it will pass away shortly, you will see darkness all around. But if you can realize your spiritual Ideal or have a vision of the Divine Form you worship, you will find that the *guru* is ever installed in the shrine of the heart. The *guru* is not destroyed by the destruction of his gross body. Because we love you, we are saying so much. . . .

'You are near me and serving me because my body is ill . . . That's all right. But if you think that it is you alone who are thus serving me and doing a great work, you are making a big mistake. Do you follow? Do you think you do me a great service by just fetching me a thing, or serving this body a little? To do the Master's work with all one's heart and soul, even from afar, is to render service to us. The Master is the Self of our self. Those who are doing the Master's work with all their heart, and at the same time trying to install Him in the shrine of their hearts through spiritual practices, are very dear to us, though they may be thousands of miles away. They are truly serving *us*. We are pleased when He is pleased through service rendered to Him. The world is pleased if He is pleased. They will reap better fruits by serving the Master than by merely serving the *guru*.'

'When all the desires that dwell in the heart fall away, then the mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman here itself.'

—KATHA UPANISHAD



# REFLECTIONS ON NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

BY THE EDITOR

India will celebrate this month the second anniversary of her Independence. This is an occasion for joyous emotion as also for calm reflection. It is, therefore, good to remind ourselves of what we stand for, what we have to defend, what we have to achieve, and how.

The Indian attitude towards Freedom and the State is not the same as it is in other countries, where nationalism has long been an ideological disease. Recently other abstract nouns have arisen claiming man's devotion and demanding vast human sacrifices. We do not look at politics in that way—as an instrument of power, or as self-sufficient. Our aim is not power as an absolute or final end. With us the guiding motive everywhere and always is Service in the cause of Freedom in the truest sense. In our eyes politics must be a means to the attainment of this Freedom for all and everywhere.

Our highest conception of polity is embodied in the phrase *Ramarajya*—a word now widely used, but vaguely, for its true content is hardly grasped by many. *Ramarajya* represents the essential elements of a truly civilized polity. The word strikes a deep chord in the Indian heart because the appeal is primarily spiritual. *Ramarajya* is based on truth and justice where the interest of the common man is prior to all other considerations. People are happy, contented, prosperous, and loyal; the ruler is guided not by the motive of power but by that of service. All this is true because the State rests upon a spiritual basis. *Ramarajya* is *dharmarajya*. We stand for this.

In society we shall ever strive to embody this conception of freedom and justice in political, social, and economic institutions. What truly characterizes a civilization is not so much its control over environment, natural or human, but its capacity for inward self-determination for an end higher than the

material. For this reason India means something very big to the world.

From the earliest times our best men have made a large claim for our civilization. They have claimed that all the peoples of the world will learn the basic principles of conduct from Indian wisdom. It is not a vain claim.

Religion in India has all along been a guide to action and not just a decorative addition to life. This total spiritual attitude towards life is something unique in history. Our tradition ascribes the highest value to the Self of man and has made the supreme judgement that the Self of man is also the Self of the Universe. All morality and achievement in India are to be traced to this supreme vedic judgement. Her view of life is that of a pilgrimage of the human soul towards Freedom. A true child of India must never forget that....

Having regard to the difficulties which faced Free India at birth and which were left behind by the foreign power when it withdrew from the scene under pressure of worldwide economic and political forces, these two years have been of no mean achievements. A short glance at India's Asiatic neighbours will quickly convince one of this. Her prestige in Asia and the world has leapt up to a height beyond all astute calculations and optimistic hopes. She is gradually assuming the chief rôle in the Asiatic drama. She has become a factor very much to reckon with in world politics. She is being regarded and relied upon as a mighty bastion of peace and order in the East. Thanks to her, Asia has risen to new importance in world councils.

At home also she has surmounted the grave initial difficulties which would have taxed to the utmost the intelligence and efficiency of any government that ever ruled. Internal chaos has been averted. Enough food has been procured and made available to

stave off famine, and a very sound food policy aiming at making India self-sufficient in matters of food by the end of 1950 has been put into execution with remarkable earnestness and drive. The inflationary spiral has been halted. Nearly all the princely States, which posed a big problem for Indian statesmanship, have been integrated, vastly increasing India's potential. But for heroic and intelligent leadership these successes could not have been achieved, and chaos and anarchy might have taken complete possession of India.

We recognize and record all this with pride and gratefulness.

But such thoughts should not blind us to the grave questions which confront us still. They cry for quick and radical solution, and unless this is done the gains will prove ephemeral and India will be overtaken by chaos and strife. True, we are not altogether blind. Are we not all familiar with the grim and menacing spectres of poverty and ignorance, and corruption on a colossal scale almost everywhere? Who can say we are not? Yet we feel there is no deep and wide understanding of a fundamental factor in the scheme of Indian reconstruction.

Our problem is both material and spiritual, and unless we recognize it as such and take practical steps—not merely verbal ones—to liquidate it on these two planes, our efforts, however bold and heroic they may be in the material sphere, will not carry us far. We are not going to talk of politics or economics here, but we feel that we should emphasize on this occasion a point which in fact we have been emphasizing all along in these pages.

To be a real, major constructive force in our national life, a political party in India must be, above all, representative of its cultural consciousness. No party can live and thrive which repudiates India's soul. India, as we have said before, has a distinct attitude towards life. It will not do to conceive it in a narrow way under the influence of Western education and against thousands of years of

historical evidence. We cannot put all nations on a level in every matter. Nations, like individuals, have their peculiar excellences. This is a matter of observed fact, and no amount of vague *a priori* theories can refute it. India's excellence lies in her broad spiritual tradition and her total attitude toward life. This is as yet very imperfectly understood. Were it not so, we would have had a very positive and nationwide approach to this fundamental national idea.

There is no contradiction between our tradition and what people love to call the modern conception of justice. Indian spirituality is not tied to any particular political or economic ideology, or social arrangement. All such human institutions are governed by historical forces which change from time to time. But one constant aim should be to realize through all these temporal institutions the ideal of man's unity and divinity. In truth, the political ideal of liberty and the economic ideal of equality derive their force and validity from the vedantic truth of man's unity and divinity. 'The gist of vedantic morality,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'is this sameness for all. . . . Religion has no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between beings. Because its aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities.'

Speaking on *Vedanta and Privilege* more than fifty years ago in London the Swami remarked: 'The practical side of vedantic morality is necessary as much today as it ever was; more necessary perhaps, than it ever was, for all this privilege-claiming has become tremendously intensified with the extension of knowledge. The ideal of God and the devil, or Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, has a good deal of poetry in it. The difference between God and the devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and selfishness. The devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God, only he has no holiness—that makes him a devil. Apply the same idea to the modern world; excess of *knowledge* and *power* with-

out holiness makes human beings devils. Tremendous power is being acquired by the manufacture of machines and other appliances, and privilege is claimed today as it never has been claimed in the history of the world. That is why Vedanta wants to preach against it, to break down the tyrannizing over the souls of men.'

Elsewhere in the same speech: 'None can be Vedantists and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone, either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the most ignorant; he has not manifested it, but perhaps he has not had the opportunity; the environments were not, perhaps, suitable to him; when he gets the opportunity he will manifest it. The idea that one man is born superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta; that between two nations one is superior and the other inferior has no meaning whatsoever. Put them in the same circumstances, and see whether the same intelligence comes out or not. Before that you have no right to say that one nation is superior to another. And as to spirituality, no privilege should be claimed there. It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God; God is here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man; what privilege can men ask?'

'The work of the Advaita, therefore, is to break down all these privileges. It is the hardest work of all, and curious to say, it has been less active than anywhere else, in the land of its birth. If there is any land of privilege, it is the land which gave birth to this philosophy—privilege for the spiritual man, as well as for the man of birth. There they have not so much privilege for money (that is one of the benefits, I think) but privilege for birth and spirituality is everywhere ....'

Alas, the last sentence is no longer true.

Today money rules and has monopolized almost all the privileges. The economic caste of our times is more diabolical in its operation than a social class.

And, further, the elimination of privilege 'is really the work before the world. In all social lives, there has been that one fight in every race, and in every country. The difficulty is not that one body of men are naturally more intelligent than another, but whether this body of men, because they have the advantage of intelligence, should take away even physical enjoyment from those who do not possess that advantage. The fight is to destroy that privilege. That some will be stronger physically than others, and will thus naturally be able to subdue or defeat the weak, is a self-evident fact, but that because of this strength they should gather unto themselves all the attainable happiness of this life, is not according to law, and the fight has been against it. That some people, through natural aptitude, should be able to accumulate more wealth than others, is natural; but that on account of this power to acquire wealth they should tyrannize and ride roughshod over those who cannot acquire so much wealth, is not a part of the law, and the fight has been against that. The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege, and throughout ages the aim of morality has been its destruction. This is the work which tends towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.'

The law of which the Swami speaks in the above paragraph is the spiritual law of self-determination which is the essential mark of a civilization and to which we have referred earlier in the beginning of this article. The constant aim of a civilization is to embody this law in social, political, and economic institutions. The attempt at such material translation has always been opposed by selfishness and ignorance. The struggle between these two factors, divine and demoniac, make the main thread of history.

When the above words were spoken by the

Swami, the rumblings of the socialistic thunder were heard in the far distance. The logical conclusions of Science and Technology, the two distinguishing marks of the modern age, were far from worked out. Today Science and Technology, which held out the promise of an earthly paradise around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have developed into the greatest threat to human peace and security. The reason is that such developments have taken place in a materialistic framework of thought.

We have quoted the Swami at some length, because he gave the correct and most up-to-date expression of the Indian tradition. And also because he makes it clear with authority and beyond doubt that justice on earth has an organic tie with a spiritual conception of reality.

Without this vedantic truth the modern ideals of liberty and justice lack a positive spiritual sanction and can claim no higher basis than a mere moral inclination. In fact, otherwise, virtues become mere moral epiphenomena. And such a basis is easily repudiated by individuals and communities when the real testing time comes or even without such an excuse. It is a fact of common observation that we have to aim higher than what we actually want to achieve. Purely on this ground it becomes necessary to look beyond society in order to achieve social happiness.

The temporal man has an eternal reference. It is this reference, the Divine Order behind the scenes as it were, which saves life and history from being a mere string of meaningless events. The values we prize, truth, compassion, charity and love, are incompatible with materialism. They wither away in a materialistic atmosphere. Russians are today accused of materialism by the liberal democracies. But Marxism arose as a reaction to British industrialism of the eighteen-forties and as a material version of Hegelian dialectics which reduced the Absolute to a process in time. Marxism is a Western heresy; the

Russians have only drawn full logical deductions from modern beliefs. The working dogma of the modern age is that the temporal process is the only reality and that Heaven will be achieved on earth at some undated millennium. Of course, liberal humanists throw over it a patchy cloak of spiritual phrases. Unfortunately the cloak does not last long. For the contradiction between our moral values and a materialistic hypothesis is realized in the end.

Swami Vivekananda wanted that this vedantic truth must be made practical and operative in all the planes of society. The conception of freedom and equality must be embodied in appropriate social, political, and economic institutions. Religion is not for us a decorative addition to life. We are not committed to the defence of every pocket or prejudice in society. Our tradition does not stand for a system of private enterprise that operates to the detriment of general interest. Vedanta is not tied down to any defined system or dogma. We do not defend a *status quo* politically, socially, or economically. We do not associate our tradition with servitude to received habits and with the protection of vested interests. We stand for a broad spiritual conception of Freedom. And we shall defend our culture against its denial implied in the conception of a secular society. To say that religion is what a man does with his own solitariness is to take a very poor view of religion. It is absolutely un-Indian.

For nearly a thousand years the soul of India has been starved of expression. Adverse forces, originating mostly from wider causes than national, compelled India to retire into a narrow shell of social rigidity, which, however, has preserved a few embers from a once bright and living flame. The darkest period was reached in the eighteenth century; the nineteenth saw the first glimmer of a new dawn. Today the day has just broke and India faces the morning sun of a resplendent day yet to come. If we cast a glance at the recent past we shall see that our freedom

has come as an inevitable conclusion, in the political field, of a total resurgence which is going to have far larger consequences in every plane of life in future. The vast majority of us may have no notion of this, many may even discount it as a dream; but those who have the subtle perception to judge the deeper forces in action and see the long-term operations of history will not doubt this.

India's hour has struck; the time has arrived to give the fullest expression to her soul. Any attempt to repudiate or ignore the spiritual basis of our civilization will entail very serious consequences. The one large conclusion we can draw from Indian history is that our civilization has not perished, as the great majority of known civilizations have, because we have always emphasized the spiritual aim of life. Let us recognize this.

But mere recognition is not enough. We need practical steps to preserve this tradition. Side by side with material improvement steps are necessary for spiritual reconstruction of India. The old institutions from which the people in towns and the countryside used to derive spiritual values have mostly decayed. They require to be preserved and extended and emphasized. Modern conditions may necessitate their alterations or replacement in new forms. These can be easily done, keeping in view the central aim. It will be folly to leave religion to ignorant priests; an intelligent public concern is essential. Unfortunately, a negative and unintelligent approach to the question has long been in evidence. The consequences of such an attitude cannot be weighed or measured but are clear to those who have knowledge of man at a deeper level of analysis and who are diligent enough to enquire into the deeper

causes of the prevalent moral decline. As hunger is not appeased by speeches, so character is never formed by moral verbiage.

We feel anxious about this because we know the challenge of the disruptive forces which give themselves rosy hues and alluring names to entice people with hungry stomachs and empty minds, cannot be met by bread alone. Man does not live by bread alone. He needs a positive and significant outlook on life. The view which regards religion as a projection or ideology serving as a mere fillip to morality can never be a faith for men to live by, particularly in times of trouble. It is a view that actually makes for the forces of destruction and tyranny. Unless our youths can be inspired by the positive and broad conception of Vedanta, crude heretical faiths are sure to be drawn into the spiritual vacuum created in their hearts by modern education and the prevailing social atmosphere. The challenge of the destructive forces of our time can be met and defeated by a broad, rational scheme of reconstruction based on the real truth and value of man. Vedanta offers the only solution. On its basis political parties can be built up relating the spiritual end of man with the broadest social and economic programme. Nothing will appeal so much to the Indian mind as a spiritualized conception. Unless we are able to see the forces at work in Indian life and shape policies according to them, we shall fail to achieve anything.

Our seers have dreamed of a future India standing on a new pinnacle of glory unattained before and as a light unto the world. Will it remain a dream? All the conditions for its fulfilment are there. It is up to us to make an intelligent use of them and convert it into a reality.

'Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# SOCIETY AND DHARMA\*

By HON'BLE DR SAMPURNANANDA

It is a happy sign of the times that we are meeting here in this Conference today. I cannot say what the Conference will actually accomplish, but if it succeeds, as I trust it will, in focussing attention on some of those social, ethical, and spiritual problems which are apt to be neglected owing to the pressure of political and economic questions which demand an immediate solution, it will have a great achievement to its credit. As a matter of fact, any solution of political and economic problems that ignores psychology and ethics and is not broadbased on a sound system of philosophy cannot be of an enduring nature.

Indian society, particularly that section of it with which some of us are so intimately connected, viz. the Hindu society, is today in a state of spiritual chaos. The relentless logic of economic and political conditions is breaking down many of our social institutions. It will be impossible, for instance, to rebuild the fast crumbling edifice of the joint-family system. Caste, as we knew it, is dying. Whatever the old *smritikara* might have meant when he said, *na stri svatantriyam arhati*, no woman today is going to admit this and no man is bold enough to say that she should. The old taboos and the old religious sanctions have no vitality left in them. There is a crying need for a re-orientation of our whole social system and our whole social outlook. Those who seek to deny the need for such orientation on the ground that our laws, the basis of our social system, are immutable, are hopelessly in the wrong. A glance at the *Smritis* will give ample proof of the changes which society has been continually undergoing. To a large extent change is spontaneous, but it is susceptible to guidance and control. It is possible, if our religious leaders and those who are learned in the *shastras* will take a timely and liberal view of things, as did the great

*smritikaras* and *munis* who in their gatherings at Naimisharanya and elsewhere expounded the *dharma* from time to time, to evolve what might be called a new *Smriti* suited to these times, a code of social organization and conduct, responsive to the needs of the times but attuned to the wisdom of the *Shruti*. This is what our tradition and history demand. But if religion takes a negative stand and ignores the past history of its own growth, the result will still be a change but a change grafted from without. The Hindu Code Bill is an instance in point. Of course, it is good in parts but it is ill-conceived as a whole. It is not the expression of a genuine and insistent demand from below. But those who oppose it on the ground that no change is needed, that the *shastras* countenance no change and that the Legislature is not competent to enact social laws are among its most powerful, though unwilling, supporters.

The attitude of the average educated Hindu towards the religion to which he is supposed to be formally affiliated is one of cynical contempt. And he cannot always be blamed for this. Hinduism has not been presented to him in a form commanding his respect or serious attention. He has heard of Brahman and Maya, of course, and knows in a vague way that somehow these words and the concepts for which they stand are not entirely disreputable in Western eyes. But some of the current stories about gods and *rishis* are disgusting, and the Hinduism with which he is most familiar at home is often nothing but a mummerly designed to bring some money to a brahmana whose personal character or attainments do not entitle him to any special consideration. The temples and the *sadhus* seem equally repellent. The wrangles, so delightful to the heart of the pandit, the endless verbal juggleries centering round

\* Inaugural address delivered at the Conference of Religion and Culture, Lucknow University, March, 1949.

*avachchheda* have no relation to life. I repeat, the educated man is not always to blame if he forms such opinions. In their foolish zeal to glorify Shiva and Vishnu, particularly the latter, the authors of some of the *Puranas* have dragged down into the mud the characters of Indra and the other great Vedic gods. *Paurohitya* has degraded itself beyond recognition. A man is ostracized if he takes food from forbidden hands, but no standard of knowledge or conduct is expected from the man who is to mediate between heaven and earth. There will be a howl if the Legislature is invoked, but public opinion and notably brahman opinion is every day flouting Manu's injunctions :

*Nanutishthati yah purvam, nopaste  
yahscha pashchimam  
Sa shudravadbahishkaryah, sarvasmadvi-  
karmamah.*

(He who does not perform the morning and the evening *sandhya* should be deprived of all the functions of a *dvija* like a *Shudra*.)

Our temples and monasteries are, as a rule, more unclean than was the temple at Jerusalem which Christ cleaned, whip in hand. It is up to our great *sadhus* and scholars to try to undo this mischief. Hinduism must be brought down from the clouds to the solid earth. I believe in all earnestness that the truths it embodies, the eternal truths revealed to mankind by the *Shruti*, contain in them the key to all knowledge. There is no problem of modern life that cannot be solved in their light. They provide that philosophical background against which we can build the brave new world which shall ensure peace, equality of opportunity, and social justice to all men. It is a sin to interpret Hinduism as a collection of curious formulae about a world that is no more. Hinduism is dynamic and capable of infinite adjustment to variations in the subjective and objective environment.

The strength of Hinduism lies in the fact that it is not a religion with a compelling and exclusive credo. A man may believe in one

God or a hundred or in none and yet he can be a good Hindu if he accepts the Hindu way of life. That way of life can be expressed by one word and by none other, *dharma*. One can define *dharma* in many ways, but Kanada's definition seems to me to be quite exhaustive :

*Yato abhyudayanishshreyasasiddhih sa  
dharmah*

(That which conduces to a happy and prosperous life in this world and to the realization of the Supreme Object of life is *dharmah*.) A happy life is an ideal that may be variously expressed but surely the wellknown vedic prayer which every one recites while performing his *sandhya* gives expression to much the most important part of it :

*Pashyema sharadah shatam, jivema sharadah  
shatam, prabravama sharadah shatam,  
shrinuyama sharadah shatam, svudhinah  
syama sharadah shatam.*

(May our senses of knowledge and action serve us for a hundred years, may we continue to gather the True knowledge for a hundred years, may we remain independent of any one else for a hundred years, may we live thus for a hundred years.) A life so lived will naturally be a life dedicated to *dharmah*.

The world today is a prey to a hundred evils because we are all taught to stand up for our rights. *Dharma* places the emphasis on duty. If all were to perform their duties, everyone will get his rights, for what is one man's duty is another man's right. Their can be a scramble for rights but no two men intent on performing their duties need come into conflict with each other. Our old literature only defines duties, it nowhere gives a catalogue of privileges. Whatever caste might mean, the *Smritis* only lay down what the members of the four castes shall do in relation to others, not what they shall seek from others. *Dharma* is the third *puru-shartha*. It follows naturally from the two others, *artha* and *kama*. Intelligent analysis shows that the *artha* and *kama* of every individual is bound up with the *artha* and *kama*

of others. A hundred individuals contribute, each in his own different way, to the happiness of every individual. The surest way, then, to secure one's own happiness is to work for the happiness of others :

*Parasparam bhavayantah shreyah param-  
avapsyatha*

(Serving each other, ye shall attain the Supreme Good.) Starting from the plane of enlightened selfishness, the pursuit of *dharma* reaches a stage when the means become the end and *dharma* is practised for its own sake, without any thought of profit to one's own self. The attainment of this stage is helped by the constant practice of *maitri*, *karuna*, *mudita* and *upeksha*—the active spread of happiness and the active removal of pain, the active help of those engaged in doing good and the active opposition of evil, without any feeling of ill-will towards the evil-doer.

But what is the criterion of *dharma* ? It may well be asked. How is one to distinguish that which is *dharma* from that which is not ? A hundred answers have been suggested by writers on ethics, and they are all partially correct. Hindu thinkers answer the question thus : The substratum of Reality behind this world of appearance and diversity is One. They call it Brahman. But it appears as the many through Maya, nescience or ignorance. The supreme object of life is *moksha*, the permanent removal of this veil of *avidya* and the realization—not merely intellectual acceptance—of that Oneness. Such realization, *sakshatkara*, comes from the practice of Yoga till *samadhi* has been experienced, and in no other way. But there are moments when, at least temporarily, the veil is lifted and there is a blinding flash, as it were, of non-duality. Such moments are those in which a man performs a truly moral act. A lover may feel a sense of identity with the object of his love, or a mother with her child. But this sense of identity with one is surrounded by a thick

dark ring of exclusiveness and separateness from every one else. But in the moment when one performs an act of supreme self-sacrifice for another, one feels identity with the other and separateness from no one. The world of diversity ceases to exist for him for that instant of time. He may be dragged down to earth the next moment, but for once his feet have trod the golden path of the gods. The test of a moral act, then, is this. Whatever tends to produce a sense of unity is *dharma*, virtue ; whatever, on the other hand, creates or fosters a sense of separateness is *adharma*, sin. Duality is always to be shunned : *driteeyadvai bhayam bhavati*. The practice of *dharma* is not easy, but then nothing worthwhile is ever easy. What matters is effort. If one's determination is sincere, every failure will be a stepping stone to success. There is nothing to which *tapas* will not win through. *Tapas* is not self-inflicted bodily pain but a reasoned self-denial of the things of the flesh as being unworthy of a man's desire : *Tena tyaktena bhunjeethah magri-  
dhah kasyasiddham* (Enjoy through self-denial. Do not be greedy for the property of others.) The others are the five senses of knowledge and worldly objects are their property.

It is all very good, it may be said, to speak of the true knowledge, supposed to be enshrined in the *Vedas*, but is it not a fact that the *Vedas* speak, among other equally reprehensible things, of the four castes as having sprung from the four parts of the body of the Creator and is not the Shudra relegated to the lowliest part of that body ? The answer is an emphatic no. The *Veda* is not responsible for the folly of its interpreters who would seek to foist all their convenient customs and prejudices on to the scripture. In the first place, our philosophy knows no Creator, like the God of the *Bible* and the *Koran*. The *Purushasukta*, in which the vedic verse referred to above occurs, in speaking about the Virat, says :



*Sahasra shirshah purushah sahasrakshah  
sahasrapat  
Sa bhumim vishvato vritva atyatisthat  
dashangulam*

(The Being whose head is the head of all beings, whose senses of knowledge and action are the senses of all beings, he who is immanent in the world and goes beyond the ten fingers, the ten directions.) Clearly this is the Oversoul, the sum total of all things, the Being which coordinates all beings as parts of one transcendent Organism, so that the humblest bacillus is linked up with the highest gods. The succeeding verses describe its manifestation in several ways. And the verse which is supposed to sanction the tyranny of caste does no more than portray Him in the form of human society. In God as society the teachers and seers will naturally occupy the highest place and the manual workers will be the feet, the solid foundation on which the whole edifice will find support. To read an anthropomorphic meaning in this beautiful passage will be to reduce it to absurdity. If the brahmana literally came out of the mouth of the Virat, from which mouth did he come, because all mouths, the mouth of the saint and of the sinner, of the cow and of the dog, belong to Virat? And if he came out of all the mouths, he would share the virtues and vices of all the creatures, and there would be no superiority because of birth in him. The *Vajrasuchikopanishat* says:

*Jati brahmana iti chet na tatra jatyantara  
jantushu aneka jati sambhava maharshiyo  
bahavah santi ... yah kashchidatmanam  
adviteeyam ... sakshat aparoksheekritya  
kamaragadidosharahitah, shamadamadi sam-  
panno ... dambhamkaradibhih asamspri-  
shatahetah vartate ... sa eva brahmanah.*

(If it be said that a man is a brahman by birth, it is replied it cannot be so. There have been many *maharshis* born in non-brahman families and some have had non-human origins. He who has realized the One Self, and is devoid of lust and attachment, who is possessed of

Self-control and is free from hypocrisy and pride, he alone is a *brahmana*.)

But the theory of *varnashrama vibhaga* is one of the integral parts of the Hindu way of life. False pride and abuse of privilege may have rendered the old terms odious but every society that does not wish to govern itself on the basis of prejudice and greed must adopt the system—I am referring to *varna*, not caste, in some form or other. The present-day concentration of power and prestige in the same hands is one of the greatest curses which the Industrial Revolution has brought in its wake. That those whose one claim to distinction is the ability to exploit the brains and muscles of others and thus to amass wealth should be in a position to prostitute the machinery of administration to suit their own ends and even to guide the intellectual and cultural life of the people a great social disaster. The only conceivably greater disaster would be mobocracy.

If humanity is to be saved from the mania of mass suicide which seems to have overtaken it today, if this beautiful earth is not once again to become the free-hold of the hyena and the jackal, the vulture and the mosquito, with a few naked savages skulking in the shadows of the giants of the forest, then a new society has to be built up. There will be room in it for science as a great mental discipline, as an indispensable aspect of that knowledge of Truth which man must possess if he is to function properly and as an ameliorator of pain and want. But science and Art and every other institution must derive their inspiration from philosophy. And no system of philosophy other than the Advaita Vedanta can give the necessary inspiration. The essential oneness of all existence must always be present before those whose privilege it should be to guide society in one capacity or another, and all life, social, political, cultural, and economic, should be so correlated, so organized, as to further the realization of this Oneness. The educational system will be a

great instrument in this process. The State cannot create yogis and it cannot force men into the state of *samadhi*, but it can, if it wills, consciously set this task before itself, reduce the obstacles to such realization to a minimum.

In such a society, the guiding principle of all activity, individual and communal, will be *dharma*. Men born and brought up in an atmosphere which emphasizes the unity that underlies all seeming diversity cannot possibly be dominated by ideas of self-aggrandizement and intolerance. They may, due to past *samskaras*, make mistakes but their mistakes will not be irretrievable and will not leave behind them that aftermath of bitterness which is the characteristic of *sakama karma*, action dictated by the desire for personal gain. Such men will not try to make scripture a scape-goat for their own indolence and love

of money and power. Their lives will be cleaner and more austere than ours but there will be more of beauty in them, for Art comes from communion with nature and nature does not allow the impure of heart to cross her inmost portals. It is such men who alone can live the old and eternally true teaching, 'Do to others as thou wouldst be done by,' for they will constantly feel that they themselves are the seeming others and no one can wish ill to himself.

If such a society is to be born, there is no time to lose. The thinkers of all countries, and not they alone, must come together and rise above the petty prejudices of race, colour, or religious faith. . . . It is thus alone that the new society can be fashioned. Let me hope this Conference will prove a step in that direction.

## THE MARCH OF HISTORY

(BEING AN ATTEMPT AT A PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHIC INTERPRETATION OF THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY AS AN EFFORT TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF CULTURAL SYNTHESIS)

By P. S. NAIDU

### PREFATORY NOTE

The two lectures on 'The Historic Process' contain the ideas which took shape in the mind of the author as he attempted, from a psycho-philosophic point of view, to think through the main currents of the cultural history of the human race. The philosophies of progress, of Hegel, Spencer, Comte, and Spengler, and the metaphysical concepts of the evolutionary philosophies of Lloyd Morgan and Bergson, on which striking theories of human advance may be erected, arranged themselves into a hierarchy with a three-fold gradation, as the author struggled to synthesize into a unity the conflicting elements in the annals of man's cultural achievement. The first lecture contains a brief critical survey of this hierarchy, and concludes with the formulation of a new

psycho-philosophical formula, for viewing in a correct light the nature and direction of human advance. In the second lecture the new formula is elaborated, and the cultures of Eastern and Western nations are evaluated and graded according to the extent of their contribution to the cultural unity of mankind. Indian culture alone, it is shown, holds the key to final unity. The spirituality of our ancient land is the crown and culmination of the Historic Process. Vedantic unity is the distant goal towards which the mighty current of human history is rolling on.

### THE HISTORIC PROCESS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

#### PESSIMISM Vs. OPTIMISM

Many of us assembled here tonight are fortunate in having our lives carefully pro-

protected from the rude and vulgar shocks of the workaday world by the loving care of the University or the College to which we belong. And as we contemplate calmly and dispassionately the progress of the institution which has nurtured our intellect, we are inclined to say that there has been real advance in matters that count most in our life. We feel that not only in the external appurtenances of our intellectual life, namely, buildings and equipment, but in the deeper things, too, of the mind, there has been notable progress in recent times. Do we not then, while turning over in our minds and reflecting on the inner meaning of the history of the University to which we belong, perceive one increasing purpose running through the ages? I have no manner of doubt whatever in affirming that we do. And while we are in this expansive mood we may be tempted to march along joyfully with the great poet of optimism when he calls to us invitingly 'to grow old with him, to trust God, to *see all* and be not afraid.' And as we feel inwardly cheered by the sight of the apparent spread of faith, hope, and love, we have an irresistible urge to exclaim, 'God is in his heaven, and everything is right on earth!' But—when we step out of the protected cloisters of the University campus into the ugly world of power politics abroad, and above all into the hideous battlefields of the 'civilized' nations, and when we consider 'the wholesale cruelties, lusts, manias, and obsessions that rage like all-consuming forest fires in the life of humanity', we feel inclined to agree with the pessimist who says that 'theories of progress seem ridiculous escapisms, fashioned by timid, bloodless and unimaginative spiritual bankrupts.' It is not as though the sadistic lusts and barbaric brutalities marred the pages of history here and there, so that they may be passed by without comment. The human race seems to indulge in these unholy orgies periodically, and the advance of civilization seems but to refine the means by which nations slake their thirst for human blood. Ponder over the hecatombic

sacrifices of the Carthaginians and Aztecs, and the atrocities of the Romans, Semites, and Huns. Consider the careers of Nero, Attila, Ivan the Terrible, and the long succession of their compeers ending with their monstrous blood-brothers in contemporary Europe. 'The perusal of general history unfolds a gloomy tale of the insensate greeds, lusts and panic fears, and of the ferocious passions and hideous deeds of the uncultured mass.' The gloomy Dean of St Paul seems to be right when he asserts that of progress in such a system as a whole, there cannot be a trace. Nor can there be any doubt about the fate of our own planet. Man and all his achievements will one day be obliterated like a child's sand castle when the next tide comes in. I am reminded in this connection of a little known poem of Byron, *Cain*. It opens with a service of thanksgiving to the Almighty in which all join but Cain. 'Hast thou nought to thank God for?' asks someone. 'No' he answers. 'Dost thou not live?' asks Adam. 'Must I not die?' replies Cain. And left to himself Cain breaks out into a soliloquy, the refrain of which is :

'I judge by the fruits—and they are bitter—  
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.'  
Cain's pitiful wail seems to represent truly the mood of many of our contemporaries who are inclined to read in the pages of history 'the same old story of human greed and human brutality, the hand of man raised against man, and one evil succeeding another with short-lived interludes of great men and pleasing romances of love and life.' And yet, as one of my predecessors very pertinently asks, 'Have we lived in vain? Can we not wring out of the records of man's doings their inner secret, some plan, some dominating idea, which could illumine vast masses of arid historical facts?' The tenor of our answer to these questions is of supreme importance at the present moment. And the proper answer may perhaps be found by reflecting on that awe-inspiring creation of our age—the atom bomb. The bomb is both a challenge and an answer :

a challenge to our faith in the moral perfectibility of man, and in the ever-increasing goodness of his relationship to brother man and to God: and an answer to those who seek anxiously for a clue to a clear understanding of the nature and direction of human progress. Atomic energy is neither morally evil nor morally good in itself, but human will makes it so. The forces released by atomic research are ethically colourless; what endows them with ethical value is human character, human endeavour, and human purpose—the character of the men or the groups of men who handle it, their aims, and purposes. This is a very trite saying, but it is profoundly true. Natural events and natural forces are clothed with ethical and social values through the operation of the human will. If that is true, then it goes without saying that historical events are doubly draped in the fabric spun out of the same will, nay more, their very stuff is composed of human will. Therefore, the direction, forward or retrograde, which these events take will depend on how the will wills which will guide the great movements of history. The cultivation of this will through proper training, its refinement by first anchoring it in an optimistic faith, and then making it see the rational grounds of such faith—these are indicated as the supreme need of the hour. That there are evil tendencies in mankind few who have lived through the last quarter of a century would care to deny. But of this I am sure, the balance, the overwhelming balance is on the side of good. This is a matter of faith. And the very act of faith in the essential goodness of man, the very act of willing to see and find such goodness will help to further that goodness, just as the Nazi faith in the wickedness of men has nourished human brutality and animality by the very act of believing in such evil tendencies. The very act of faith in ‘an increasing purpose running through the ages’ will not only enable us to see that purpose, but will also strengthen the Divine hands toiling to forge the conditions for its fulfilment. Collective willing, I mean,

the co-operative act of focussing different centres of individual consciousness on the same purpose, is a potent force in determining the destinies of mankind in as much as it may help or hinder Divine will. The solemn duty of directing human will into proper channels rests not only with us, teachers, but also with leaders in every sphere of human activity. But, even the sturdiest will falters sometimes. It is then that reason should step in, and prop up faith with convincing arguments for a belief in the inherent goodness and perfectibility of man. It is the duty of the Philosopher of History to produce these arguments, and to the fulfilment of that duty I shall now address myself.

## II. FAILURE OF PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

It is a matter for grave concern that even after Hegel and a whole host of post-Hegelian philosophers had strained every nerve to convince the intellectuals of the reality of progress in human history, there should still remain bleak scepticism in the mind of a good few of the serious-minded. Doubts will always assail those of poor intellect, and scepticism will invariably take hold of the undeveloped minds of the common mass. But when highly refined intellectuals, accustomed to careful sifting and weighing of evidence, are inclined to hold that the idea of progress is an illusion, then the blame for their disbelief should be laid at the doors of the philosophers who have evidently mishandled the data of history. When we make a thorough search for the root cause of the incompetence of these philosophers we find that *environmentalism* is the source of their failure. These thinkers have laid undue emphasis on the superficialities of historical movements, utterly neglecting the supremely important and essential factors. In their anxiety to display the part played by the environment in shaping the destiny of human events, these philosophers have individually and collectively ignored human motives, passions, aspirations,

and ideals which are the true causes of historical events. Man is the central, dominating figure on the stage of history, and a philosophy of history which neglects the inner forces operating in the mind of man is doomed to fail sooner or later. It is this neglect of the psychological forces that is the root cause of the barrenness of the several philosophies of history that have come down to us from Hegel and his numerous successors. We shall, therefore, essay to give a psycho-philosophical orientation to world history, displaying great human events and movements since the dawn of civilization as so many stages in a struggle for cultural unity. This new approach to world history will reveal the one increasing purpose running through the ages by throwing into relief the collective effort of the human race to achieve unity and co-operation. Before we take up this task let us attempt a very brief but critical survey of the existing philosophies of history, with a view to locate the flaws in them.

### III. THE THREE METHODS OF PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY

There are three methods of treating the cultural history of man, the *mechanistic*, the *biological*, and the *psycho-philosophical*. The first method draws its inspiration from the deterministic laws established by the physical sciences, the second from the biological concept of evolution, and the third from the elusive indeterministic psychological factors of the human mind. As man is infinitely superior to the mere beast, and this to brute matter, so is the psychological method far above the biological and physical methods of interpreting history. And let us remind ourselves that brute matter is capable only of change in place, animals, of simple growth, while man alone can progress towards an ideal. This progress towards an ideal cannot be handled by logical tools forged out of the deterministic stuff of the physical sciences, nor can it be handled by evolutionary tools coined out of mechanistic and environmentalistic biology.

It can be handled only by the subtle concepts of philosophical psychology.

### IV. HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Hegel's Philosophy of History belongs to the first head of our classification; in fact, it is the example *par excellence* of the mechanistic approach to the problems of world history. This will come as a shock to many of you who will at the moment be recalling to your mind images of the grand parade of Freedom, Spirit, Reason, and Self-consciousness that Hegel makes in the opening chapters of his well-known work. But I shall in a few moments establish the soundness of my contention. And in the meanwhile let us give Hegel his due. Before him Leibnitz, Lessing, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Rosencranz had made brilliant guesses respecting the foundations of general history, but their inspiration failed to crystallize into anything substantial for the benefit of their successors. There were a few among Hegel's predecessors who formulated views which served as irritants to our philosopher. The names of Vico, Herder, Schlegel, and Winckelmann may be mentioned in this connection. Vico concerned himself with ancient history, and what little he has to say about human progress is covered over with so much that is ugly and forbidding that we are tempted to pass it by without notice. Herder who is often eulogized by scholars was a poet with a distaste for metaphysics, and consequently blundered into false analogies regarding human progress. Schlegel starts with the dictum that man was born free, and sees in the historic progress only a degeneration of original freedom—a view hardly helpful to a proper interpretation of the events of human history. Winckelmann attempted to write cultural history, but failed because of his dogmatism and of his concentration on the outward conditions of culture. Before Hegel, therefore, we find only dots, lines, and curves on the historical canvas. Hegel poured these into the vigorous mould of his intellect, and drew out a strikingly

complete pattern, full and finished to the minutest details. As Egon Freidell, a recent recruit to the ranks of the Philosophers of History remarks, 'In Hegel's philosophy of history culminated the efforts of a whole series of German writers...to appreciate the nurturing influence of the great collective institutional products of humanity.' And it must be admitted that the influence of Hegel on post-Hegelian writers has been deep and abiding.

From ancient China to the July Revolution—it is a vast stretch of history indeed that is covered by Hegel. On the canvas of world history spread out before us we see a grand and impressive panorama of vast events, of infinitely manifold forms of peoples, states, and individuals in unrelenting succession. 'The play is presented of everything that can enter into and interest the soul of man—all his sensibility to truth, beauty and goodness. On every hand we recognize aims adopted and pursued whose accomplishment we desire. We hope and fear for them. In all the grand events and achievements presented before us we behold human action and human suffering predominant; everywhere something akin to ourselves, and therefore everywhere something that excites our interest.' Such is the grandeur of the Hegelian painting, and such are the feelings and sentiments aroused by its appeal to the depths of humanity in us. China and India are there in the picture, and so are Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor; Poland and Russia; France and England; and above all Germany. But—where are the African peoples, where are America and Australia? Ah! those are very inconvenient questions, and our philosopher would have us wink at the omission. But how could we? It takes a very big wink indeed to hide out three whole continents and a big chunk of the fourth. So, Hegel advances some lame arguments to bolster up his false position. America, he says, is the echo of the past or the land of the future, and has little interest for philosophy of history. African character exhibits

absolute injustice and so may be dismissed from further consideration as lying only on the threshold of history. Thus does Hegel drop more than half the world out of his history: but even so, how much has he achieved? Mighty little, we should say, judged by the sober criticism of learned scholars. We are justified in asking why, in spite of the meticulous care with which Hegel handles his material, fair-minded critics are so thoroughly disappointed with him? Why does a recent German writer on cultural history characterize Hegel's philosophy of history as a mere skeleton which may never be clothed with living flesh, and within which pulsating blood may never circulate? Why has Hegel failed, in spite of his avowed *idealism*, to establish, in his treatment of history, the operation of one abiding purpose running through the ages? When we make an unbiassed and objective examination of the Hegelian position we come upon a surprising secret in Hegelian philosophy hitherto concealed from our view. Hegel conceived of the historic process in terms of the *consciousness* of freedom. I want the term 'consciousness' to be noted in particular. It was the undoing of Hegel. The vision that he had of the true nature of human history was completely clouded and distorted by the rigidity of his logic of consciousness. Freedom is not easy to define, and Hegel sought to interpret it, quite legitimately I should say, in terms of spirit. But in the spirit he emphasized consciousness and reason, to the exclusion of the foundations of these elements in emotion. He saw in the grand movements of world history the objective manifestation of infinite reason, and a steadily graded harmonization or reconciliation of the objective with subjective intelligence. 'The only thought which philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of history' says Hegel, 'is the simple conception of reason.' And this *reason*, of course, follows the dead and deadening triadic process known as the dialectic process. So the grand Hegelian opening in

the exaltation of Freedom has a sorry ending in the crippled dialectical formula. If you stress consciousness, you have to over-emphasize the cognitive elements in it to the exclusion of the dynamic conative elements which are the heart and soul of personality and individuality. The emphasis on cognition is bound to result in some such rigid and abstract logical formula as the Hegelian dialectic which is incompetent to deal with life and its upsurging development. It is this *dialectic* that is the main spring of Hegel's philosophy of history, and it is also the root cause of his failure. No wonder that his disciple Marx embraced this principle passionately to bring forth his materialistic *weltanschauung*. If the philosophy of history is the solid kernel of Hegelian philosophy, then the triadic formula is the juice in that kernel. And this formula is too wooden, too rigid, too mechanistic to deal with the life-process which is fluid and alogical. From thesis you jump across to the antithesis, and then somehow get kicked up to the synthesis. The whole movement is jerky, staircase-like, rickety and rockety! No wonder, then, that a reviewer of a recent edition of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* speaks of 'the hocus-pocus of the dialectic.' No wonder that Sir Radhakrishnan says that 'the idea of a dialectical movement in historical sequence is an illusion,' and no wonder that Professor Leighton speaks of the entire Hegelian scheme as a *myth*.

Two criticisms, then, we urge against the Hegelian formula considered as a conceptual tool for unravelling the tangled skein of history. Firstly, there is visible here an utter neglect of the conative elements lying at the very foundations of the contingent and the unforeseen, governing the direction of human destiny. This neglect is evidently motivated by the desire to make the dialectical formula work smoothly. Secondly, the Hegelian conception of freedom is an empty form without any content. How could any content pulsating with dynamic life be found

by one who is wedded to an abstract, life-destroying dialectical formula?

Weighty objections have been urged against the Hegelian way of interpreting history. Sir Radhakrishnan draws our attention to the absence in it of any creative gradation of purposes and values. F. M. Smuts shows how the Philosophy of History has debased idealism into repulsive materialism. Spengler ridicules the mystic three-fold order of the dialectic, and shows how Hegel was forced in a rather naive manner to ignore those nations which did not fit into his rigid scheme. A more pointed criticism is that Goethe's deep and spiritual idea of historic development has been mechanized and debased through the instrumentality of Hegel and his dialectic. But the weightiest and the most damaging criticism comes from the facts of history. It is a significant comment of real history on Hegel's view that India whose people he characterized deprecatingly as those who had not attained to the true knowledge of the spirit, and whose conception of freedom was one of caprice, ferocity, and brutal recklessness of passion, should have produced a whole galaxy of the true liberators of the spirit, a Buddha, a Shankara, a Ramanuja, a Ramakrishna, a Tagore, and a Mahatma, while Germany, the land characterized by Hegel as the highest in the scale of evolution, and as the only true reflection on earth of God's self-consciousness should, after a long course of spiritual development, have produced a Hitler, a Hess, a Goebbels, a Goering, a Himmler and the Belsen monsters, whom not Attila, not even Tamerlane could have rivalled in caprice, ferocity, and brutality and utter disregard of human personality and individuality. And so we turn away from Hegel and his Philosophy of History sadly disappointed, and turn to those thinkers whose thought has its roots in the sciences of life.

#### V. SPENCER AND EVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

Among the thinkers who look to biology

for an orienting concept, Spencer is the earliest. His system marks as it were a transition from the mechanistic to the biological trend in interpreting history. In Spencer we find great anxiety to make use of the then newly discovered principle of the evolution of living organisms to the elucidation of the apparently wayward path taken by human institutions. Yet, the rigour of logical determinism is still there in the neat and trim formula of Spencer which displays the relationship between the whole and its parts. That is why I have chosen to speak of his system as an apt example of determinism in biological philosophy.

No one has any hesitation in pronouncing today the Spencerian formula as inadequate for dealing with the historic process. There was a time when the concept of an ascent from the indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity through a continuous differentiation of parts accompanied by greater and greater integration of functions was held to be valid even in the realm of human affairs. But when Spencer attempted to apply his formula to the evolution of social laws he failed, and at the very moment when he was publishing his mighty tomes on *Sociology and Ethics*, industrialism was rapidly moving towards centralization, blowing up the very foundation of the Spencerian formula. Apart from the numerous exceptions to Spencer's formula, which far outnumber the favourable cases, and apart from the objections which Bergson urges against it, there is a most serious defect in our thinker, and that is the mechanical rigidity of his conception. There is an inescapable determinism of a rigid type at the basis of the orderly sequence envisaged by Spencer. From brute matter to plant life, and from plants to animal organisms, the order of development seems to fit into Spencer's evolutionary hypothesis. But when we ascend from the animal to man we find that the ground under the Spencerian concept is getting shaky. My great teacher Dr Skinner was in

the habit of referring to the mechanism of a watch as the most perfect example of the Spencerian formula for progress. It is not without significance that this rigid mechanical model was chosen by the acute thinker to illustrate the highest level of progress as conceived by Spencer. How can such a deterministic and logic-ridden concept help us to see any enduring purpose running through the ages? Had Spencer attempted a philosophical generalization on a basis of embryonic development he might have fared better. But embryology is of post-Spencerian origin. Anyway the unilinear theory of Spencer is unsuited to the interpretation of the facts of human history.

## VI. SPENGLER AND HIS DECLINE OF THE WEST

To the class of biological determinism also belongs the great work of Spengler. We are constrained to pass this judgement in spite of the admiration which Spengler's *Decline of the West* has elicited from the most thoughtful critics. Egon Freidell points out that 'Spengler is perhaps the most powerful and vivid thinker to appear on the German soil since Nietzsche. One has to climb very high in world's literature to find works of such scintillating and exuberant intellect, such triumphant psychological vision and such personal and suggestive rhythmic cadence as his *Decline of the West*.... Yet Spengler is the product of his age precisely in that he is an atheist, agnostic and materialist in disguise. He takes his stand on mechanistic biology, and draws freely on subtle statistics, and even mechanics. He does not believe in a meaning of the universe, in its inherent divinity. Spengler is the last heir to the technical age, and at bottom he is a pupil of Darwin and the English sensationalists.' The Spenglerian formula is based on the growth, decay, and the final dissolution of the body. It is purely mechanical in outlook, confining itself as it does to the material and the perishable, to the utter exclusion of the immaterial, imperish-



able mental elements in human nature. The formula which Spengler has framed, is, therefore, eminently suited to establish not an increasing, but a decreasing purpose running through the ages, ending finally in the collapse and annihilation of civilization. Mechanistic formulae, then, are incapable of dealing with history which is full of the capricious and the

contingent, akin more to the elusive will of man's mind than to the physiology of his body. Let us, therefore, set aside these deterministic and mechanistic biological views of history and turn to those which may prove more helpful to us in our efforts to find an increasing purpose running through the ages.  
(To be continued)

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE UPANISHADS (III)

By SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

(Continued from the July issue)

### VEDIC KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge that was prized most in ancient India by the *rishis* was known as *Vidya*. As a result of this *Vidya*, or Knowledge of Reality, one attains Bliss and Immortality. It is quite different from ordinary knowledge, which is the product of the intellect. *Vidya* is a supersensuous and supramental experience.

According to the *Mundaka Upanishad*, one should acquire two forms of knowledge; the *apara* (lower) and the *Para* (Higher). The lower consists of the four *Vedas* (that is to say, their ritualistic portions) and their six auxiliaries. It deals with the phenomenal universe. The importance of the lower knowledge was admitted by the *rishis*. It is conducive to a man's material welfare; but its results are impermanent.

The Higher Knowledge is that by which the Imperishable Substance is known. This Imperishable Substance was given the name of Brahman by the Indo-Aryan seers; hence the Higher Knowledge was also called *Brahmavidya*, the Knowledge of Brahman; and this is the knowledge to which was given the general name *Upanishad*. *Brahmavidya* was regarded as the foundation of all other forms of knowledge, *sarvavidyapratishtha*. Highly treasured by the *rishis*, it was zealously

guarded by them; for they regarded it as more precious than the earth filled with riches. The secret of Brahman could be transmitted only to a qualified disciple. 'He who meets with a teacher to instruct him obtains the true knowledge.'<sup>1</sup>

'Only the knowledge that is learnt from a teacher leads to the Highest Good.'<sup>2</sup> The qualifications of the aspirant have already been described.

'If these truths have been told to a high-souled person who feels supreme devotion for God, and for his *guru* as for God, then they will shine forth—then they will shine forth indeed.'<sup>3</sup>

The actual experience of Brahman, which is the culmination of the Higher Knowledge, requires extremely austere disciplines. Only the great renouncers known as *paramahansas*, belonging to the highest order of *sannyasins*, gain this complete Knowledge of Brahman. For Brahman cannot be perceived or comprehended by the senses or by the intellect that depends on them. Only yoga can give a man that subtle depth of understanding by which the supramental truths can be appre-

<sup>1</sup> *Chh. Up.* VI. xiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Chh. Up.* IV. ix. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Svet. Up.* VI. 23.

hended. The *rishis* were adept in yoga. That is why their hearts were open to the secrets of creation and the universe.

The methods of the modern physical sciences for the discovery of truth are based upon a different notion of how to search than that which directed the *rishis* in their realization of Brahman. A scientist seeks to understand the universe through reason based on the knowledge derived from the sense-organs. But the powers of the senses are limited. Therefore, he utilizes the aid of various instruments. With the help of the telescope he brings a very distant object within the range of his vision; with the help of the microscope he immensely magnifies a minute object. Similarly other instruments come to the scientist's assistance. The technicians of science are busy, day and night, inventing new instruments by means of which to strengthen and intensify the powers of the senses.

But there exist minute things in the world that cannot be detected even by the most powerful electronic microscope. And the universe is so vast and widespread that its remotest objects would not come within a man's ken even if the largest telescope known to us were to be magnified a million times and directed toward them. The final secrets of the universe will for ever remain unrevealed to physical scientists; for intellect, aided by the senses, is the only means employed by them in their quest for understanding.

The *rishis*, on the other hand, did not entirely depend upon reason, as this word is usually understood. They developed another faculty of understanding, which is called *bodhi*, or deeper consciousness. The seeker of *Brahmavidya* awakened the subtle power of the mind and senses by means of concentration and self-control. By withdrawing the senses from outer objects, he made the scattered mind one-pointed. This practice of concentration presently endowed it with keenness, depth, and a new intensity, and as the power of concentration increased, the seeker

became aware of deeper phases of existence. Instinct, reason, and intuition, or higher consciousness—the three instruments of knowledge—all are differing states of the same mind. Hence a lower state can be developed into a higher. The means to this end, however, are not external instruments but appropriate disciplines directed within.

The vedic teacher prepared the soil of his disciple's mind before giving him any instruction regarding Brahman. Moreover, there were occasions when the instruction given was not oral. An ancient Sanskrit text says: 'The teacher explains in silence and the disciple's doubts are resolved.' When a pupil approached the preceptor for instruction, often he would be asked to meditate on the problem and seek the answer from within his own self. And so we read in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*<sup>4</sup> that Bhrigu came to his father Varuna and asked: 'Revered sir, teach me Brahman.' Varuna did not give him a direct reply; he asked the boy to practise meditation and austerities. Bhrigu followed this advice and came to the conclusion that food alone was Brahman. He was asked to meditate again. This time he realized that *prana* alone was Brahman. His father exhorted him to concentrate further. At last the nature of Brahman was revealed in Bhrigu's heart and he realized that Brahman is *Anandam*, Bliss Absolute.<sup>5</sup>

The *Upanishads* teach the truth unknown to the sense-man—regarding living beings (*jivas*), the universe (*jagat*), and God (*Ishvara*). They describe the nature and attributes of Brahman. Its reality and manifestations, its powers and aspects. They also describe the creation, preservation and ultimate dissolution of the universe, and the changes and modifications of nature (*prakriti*). Furthermore, the *Upanishads* deal with the development of the individual soul (*jiva*), its evolution and its destiny, its bondage and

<sup>4</sup> III. i.

<sup>5</sup> *Tai. Up.* III. vi.

its freedom. The relationship between matter and Spirit, between God, the universe, and living beings, also belongs to the subject matter of the *Upanishads*. These concerns relate to a supersensuous realm unknowable to a man's everyday state of consciousness. Yet the weal and woe and the good and evil of a man depend, in a special manner, upon his knowledge of these things. For man is rooted in a reality far deeper than is apparent to the senses. Just as only a small portion of an iceberg is visible, so only a small portion of man is available to the senses, no matter how they may be magnified. The solution of many of our most vital problems must come, therefore, from regions beyond the scope of the ordinary faculty of reason.

Is there a soul apart from the body? What happens to the soul after the death of the body? If a soul survives the destruction of the body, does it ever return to earth? Is a man responsible for his good and bad action? What is the goal and purpose of human life?

Our conduct and work depend upon our answers to these questions. And yet we cannot answer them intelligently with an intellect aided only by the senses.

Or again: Does God exist? Is God just and compassionate? Or is He unconcerned about man, regarding him with indifferent eyes? Is God endowed with a form or is He formless? Has He attributes or is He attributeless? Is He immanent in the universe or is He transcendent? Or is He both? Is the universe real or unreal? Does it exist outside man's mind or is it a figment of our imagination? Is the universe beginningless or has it a beginning? Has the Godhead become the universe or has He made it, like a watch, or is the universe a mere appearance superimposed upon the Godhead through an inscrutable illusion of some kind, like a mirage upon a desert? And if the universe is not unreal, is it finite or infinite?

An inquiring mind longs to find satisfactory answers to these philosophical questions; but there is no human means to satisfy such

a longing. Only the Knowledge of Brahman can break the 'fetters of the heart' and solve all doubts. This is the Hindu view. That is why the Lord Himself promulgated this Knowledge in the world through the *rishis*. The more a man's intelligence deepens, the more his heart is made pure and his mental horizon widens, the more will he understand and appreciate their teachings, as preserved in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

One can hardly exaggerate the influence of the *Vedas* upon the individual and collective life of the Hindus. Since the days of their greatness, both the political and the religious life of India have undergone tremendous changes. Many aggressive races have entered the country from outside and been absorbed in this melting-pot; other powerful cultures have retained their individual traits, like the ingredients in a huge salad-bowl. Foreign conquerors have sought, by various means, to impose their customs and ideals upon Hindu society. Nevertheless, through all these vicissitudes, the Hindu world as a whole has retained its loyalty to the *Vedas* and still recognizes them as the highest authority in religious matters.

The outer forms of the Hindu religion have certainly changed. Modern Hindus do not perform sacrifices like their ancestors. The worship in the temples has been influenced by the *Smritis* and the *Puranas*. *Tantra* has also left its impression upon the worship in many parts of the country. Yet underlying all of this there are certain fundamental truths, taught in the *Upanishads*, to which the Hindus have always adhered. It is this flexibility of the Hindu mind in adapting itself to the demands of changing circumstances, while remaining true to the immutable ideals of religion, that accounts for the marvellous vitality and the enduring character of the spiritual culture of India. Even now the vedic rituals are observed at the time of birth, marriage, death, and other important occasions of a man's life. Every orthodox Hindu belonging to the three upper castes recites,

three times a day during his prayers, the same selections from the *Vedas* which his forbears repeated five thousand years ago, while his daily obligatory religious devotions are the remnants of similar obligatory sacrifices of the vedic period.

Indian philosophy is divided into two classes : orthodox and heterodox. The orthodox philosophy is, again, subdivided into six groups. These groups are called orthodox because they rest upon the *Vedas*, not because they accept the idea of a Creator God. The Samkhya philosophy, one of the orthodox systems, does not believe in God as the Creator of the universe. Jainism and Buddhism, on the other hand, are called unorthodox because they do not accept the *Vedas* as their authority. Yet they, too, have incorporated in their systems many of the vedic doctrines. Thus the *Vedas* have influenced every vital phase of Hindu life. The Smritis and other canonical laws, which

govern the life of a Hindu, derive their validity from the *Vedas*. In Hindu society the laws that regulate the inheritance of property, adoption of children, and other social, legal, domestic, and religious customs, claim to derive their authority from the *Vedas*. Hindu society has always drawn its power and vision from the spiritual experiences of its ancient seers. Under the crust of the many superstitions of the present-day society, the penetrating eye can still discern the shining core of the vedic wisdom.

Yet this wisdom, the knowledge of Brahman, is not the monopoly of any country, sect, or race. It was developed in a special manner on the banks of the *Ganges* and the *Indus* by the Indo-Aryan seers ; nevertheless, like Brahman itself, *Brahmavidya* is universal. It belongs to all peoples and all times. It is the universal truth that is the common essence of all religions and faiths.

(Concluded)

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## HOW COULD I ENDURE THE RUIN OF MY LIFE WORK ?

BY GERALD HEARD

The first of the three basic questions which we have been asking is the question of a devotionalist. And the answer is given by a devotionalist. For, in spite of all his scholastic rationalism Aquinas was a spiritual lover, devoted to his *Ishtam*, Christ Jesus. Beside this first question the second is psychological. For Eckhart was, of all the Western mystics of whom we have adequate record, perhaps the one who most nearly approached the ideal of a *jnanin*. The first question tells us how to love God—when we have made up our mind that it is this that we would rather do than anything else. The second tells us what we may do when we find that in spite of our

intention to 'adhere' we have lost contact with the Eternal Being who is our life.

The third question is practical. It is then, as should be, answered by a man who was the most practically successful of all the saints canonized by the Church of Rome.

By founding the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola gave back to the Roman Church half the territory and all the intellectual prestige that Rome had lost to Protestantism. The non-Christian world was re-assaulted with a vigour that none of the other founders of the Orders had been able to mobilize. Indeed, the missionary attack compared with that which the Church had not been able to summon

since it made peace through Constantine with the Imperial power. After Ignatius' work took shape, to be a scholar and a devout Christian became no longer a paradox but something of a commonplace. Jesuits made a new architecture for Europe—tired of medieval gothic and renaissance pedantry, captured the teaching profession and, in a little while, were makers of astronomic instruments for the Emperor of China—who was therefore not unimpressed with their metaphysics—and founders of a communist paradise for the pre-agriculturists of the Parana, who were captivated by their teachers' wonderful skill in music.

Ignatius knew what he had done and what was growing from the plan he had laid down. Working up from his psychological instrument, *The Exercises*; by the selection of lieutenants who could supplement his genius; by adopting the techniques of militarism to the needs of ecclesiasticism; he had already made a company whose head he named The General—and whose headship he accepted for himself—a Generalship commanding such complete obedience over men of outstanding ability that the Jesuit General was soon called the Black Pope.

The actual Pope, however, was as capable as Ignatius of perceiving what a mixed blessing such an offer of service could prove to be. Ignatius himself was far too capably complex a character not to have many enemies. One of them was elected Pope when the Society was yet young, yet had shown its mettle. When Ignatius heard of the election, he said (and it is obvious he was no more a rhetorician than a coward) his 'bones became like water.' The self-control of this man had become so complete that his closest associates bore witness that when he was merry they never knew whether he felt cheerful, when he showed black anger if he was inwardly the slightest disturbed, when he was peaceful that there might not be despair or bitter pain in his heart. This self-statement of his condition is

therefore valuable and need not be doubted. The destruction of the Order was probably the one thing that could really affect this utterly mortified nature.

Yet when someone, with more psychological curiosity than consideration, asked, 'What will you do if the Pope dissolves the Order?' he replied—'One quarter of an hour in Orison and it would then be all the same.' Again, it does not seem possible to doubt his word. And when we examine the reply we see there is about it a realism and definitude which makes it not only convincing—carrying its own authenticity in the very style of it—but also arresting and informative. For in the first place it is an answer to a question so general and so grim—and yet so specifically aimed at those who have tried to be of service—that nearly everyone has heard it asked—if not of themselves, of someone they have admired—and hardly anyone dare face it. Even the good too often take refuge in the plea (so little substantiated by history): 'God could not let His work (which of course I have been doing) come to naught!' What would you do, what could you do if your life work, in which you had sublimated your passions, sunk your possessions and exchanged your pretensions—should be put to death and you poor pointless thing left to live on? It is possible that the good confront this issue at its sharpest point. But every man of energy must know how helpless he is should his work, the meaning of his social, economic and physical being, be taken away utterly from him and he become an unwanted failure. And in the second place the answer is an exact, diagnostic reply. Ignatius knows what is at stake, what the failure of the Society will mean for him, because of what it will mean to his loyalist friends and for the Church which he adored and which was still fighting an undecided counter-attack. Ignatius was not a contemplative. His vocation was action, a call to save his communion. Ignatius does not, then, play the Stoic or any of the rôles

of the superior person. He does not dismiss the painfully apt curiosity, telling the enquirer not to be inquisitive and so wrap up his wound in the mantle of offended dignity. Nor does he make light of it all. He might have carried conviction, if he had laughed it off. He had proved his toughness, yes, and his capacity for humour, so that he might have felt it wise to say, and carried conviction in the saying that it would really make no difference. Or he might have said, God will never let it happen. Again he had shown that his belief that he was doing God's will was rigid enough to have made such a statement credible. He does not use any of the great clichés: *Fiat Voluntas Tua: Laus Deo: Deo Gratias*. He gives a time table. And that is characteristic of him. For like all moderns he was interested in time in a way that the medieval was not. His 'Exercises' show that—so many weeks to have acquired this attitude toward Hell, so many to gain that toward Heaven. So when he says 'one quarter of an hour' there can be little doubt he means exactly what he says. Ignatius prayed by the clock. He was making a careful estimate and calculation between two things and the distance between them. He knew he loved his work and the extent and weight of the hopes he had for its success. He knew it was his life as far as he, an individual, had any reason for living. But he also knew how he was involved, engrossed. This was a certain degree of real discrimination—the power to see the two things—the work and the person who worked—Ignatius Loyola. And the being that looked on and saw both the Society of Jesus and its founder, with an equal detachment, that being it was who could see what to do with Ignatius, what must be done with the busy passionate Spaniard, if that creature's reason for living was suddenly taken from it. The central being Ignatius never quite lost touch with: though he evidently by his own words did not always keep in close contact with him. In fact the

distance that Ignatius found was separating the two sides of himself at the crisis in his life was precisely fifteen minutes. He was out from the shore, away from his base a quarter of an hour. Give him that time and he would know what to do with it. In that little space he would be able—he had evidently done so before—to 'pay in' the 'slack of the line' that kept him and the Atman within apart. Then, once that contact was really made, once the eternal life had absorbed the temporal, the fluctuations in the waves of circumstance would make no more difference to him than billows of mist sweeping past a walker can make him sway. 'Orison' was for Ignatius what we should probably call induced contemplation, that total awareness of Reality to which many who have practised meditation can after some time summon by an act of the will. In Ignatius' case it was not an instantaneous act. We may venture to think that in Ruysbroeck—to mention another Westerner—it would have been if not instantaneous at least a matter of seconds. Ignatius lived too busy a life to be in immediate contact, but—and in this he differs from many of our busy churchmen of today—he did not neglect to keep in mind the time it would take him to recover the essential contact. And, of course, he was aware that each day, by his contemplative prayer—which we are told he never neglected—he brought himself back to that distance. Had he found that his distance was increasing then there is little doubt he would have put himself into 'retreat.' Ignatius had no intention of 'gaining the whole world and losing his own soul.' The quarter of an hour was as much 'free play' or 'slack line' as he allowed himself. Ignatius' reply is then very germane for those—the vast majority who feel that they must live active lives but find, in Father Baker's phrase, that that life does 'decoordinate' them: not only would the total miscarriage of their effort throw them into something like despair—the little

*contretemps* of everyday dealing with people make them irritable, depressed, patently unspiritual, uncharitable, unpeaceful. And they often wonder with gloom how they could take any major disaster—and pray God that He will not try them. Does not the answer to this very common state we have all experienced lie in Ignatius' advice? 'Know how far you are out, take care never to be beyond where you can recollect yourself. Day by day—three times a day—make at least an honest check-up—and if you find the distance between you and your anchorage is increasing take more time till you are once more within sufficient distance to make yourself fast and secure should the wind come down and the sea rise.' This check-up Ignatius calls the 'examen'. It does not take long—one honest glance will show how much one has drifted in the three or four hours one has been attending to surface things. Of course the necessary re-hauling may take considerable time and exertion.

A similar illustration of this practical power in an 'active' is given at the beginning of a Japanese monk's account of his penetration into Tibet, when that country was closed to outsiders. A Tibetan Abbot, whose big monastery lay near the frontier, had permitted a foreign pilgrim to enter. The Lhasa Government, learning this, not only degraded the Abbot—which meant that he lost a powerful and dignified position—but condemned him to be drowned in the almost freezing waters of the source stream of the Brahmaputra river. He was taken in his criminal garb to be drowned. When they arrived where he was to be bound and sunk in the stream he made the Ignatian statement, 'Permit me to read over slowly to myself three times *The Diamond Sutra* and then it will be all right.' The time was

permitted him. He then with complete composure let himself be lowered with a heavy stone round him, into the stream. After some time the body was raised. He came to life again. He quietly submitted to be once more immersed. A second time he was raised, only to be found once more alive. Only at the third time was his release completed.

So many people today talk of Brother Lawrence and the continual Practice of the Presence of God, and when they do so often disparage any regular times of prayer and meditation. They say, to spend all one's time with exercises, or even a good part of it, is both pretentious and unnecessary. And yet we know that when many such good social workers meet disaster their conduct does not differ—for it cannot—very much from that of the most casual liver. They still are desiring the fruit of their works and have not achieved Karma Yoga. But they may be right that they cannot give their lives to trying to achieve a constant contemplative state. They must also realize, if they read Brother Lawrence with the slightest real care, that the state he reached was very advanced and had taken a life of austerity, which they would consider unhealthy. May not the middle step between that Carmelite perfection and the way that most of us feel compelled to live, lie in the Ignatian advice, 'Know how far you are out; never let it be more than a quarter of an hour; and see daily that you keep that distance—see that it is not growing!' Then when ruin and death come to complete our detachment, they will serve this, their intended purpose and we too shall be able to add to the authentic record of essential advice, 'Fifteen minutes in prayer and it will be all the same. The One remains, the many change and pass.'

## REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY PANDIT SHRI SHRIDIHARA NEHRU

All these fifty long years and more have kept and confirmed an abiding memory of the great Swami's abounding Grace, as it then was showered upon me, a child of seven and then eight, and has given me spiritual sustenance when none other was available or intelligible to me. It has been in a deeply moving way, in the words of Goldsmith, 'my shame in crowds, my solitary pride.' That perhaps, was my sole reason why in the course of numerous addresses on religious and spiritual subjects during my five visits to America and ten to Europe, I never revealed what was, and is, one of my greatest spiritual treasures.

But the unexpected happened, and the silence broke. During a recent visit to Colombo, Ceylon, I quite forget my previously self-imposed, self-denying ordinance and revealed my very deep debt to the personal influence of Swami Vivekanandaji, and how the spiritual light and leading, half-consciously absorbed, as a child in those dim and distant years, had helped me through the onward path in life, and helped me automatically pick out the straight from the crooked, the smooth from the rough, the bright from the dark and the true from the false.

I had lost my mother when very young; gone for me at the tender age of six were her 'blest, sweet, beloved, neighbourhood;' her lofty spirit, which could see all, penetrate all, and in a flash aspire to Heaven's light and glory. And yet who could have imagined that such a mother's subtle influence should be unconsciously but none the less convincingly replaced by a Swami's!

But inscrutable are the ways of the Unseen! 'He who doth the raven feed, yea providently caters for the sparrow' had also taken care to provide that secret guiding hand and spirit for me when I was seven and then eight years old.

Usually the mother's place is taken by a sister, an aunt, who can bring all their latent and patent affection to bear on the growing child or boy, so that he can have somewhat of the spiritual moulding which is to determine his near future and leave its indelible mark on his later life. But to think that a very highly revered and learned and worshipful superman should take such a homely place, inspire such simple feelings in a growing lad, go so far to shape his being—is to think the unthinkable, the incredible.

Reverend gentlemen, in black or saffron robes, are held by women and children as 'a thing ensky'd and sainted: by their renouncement an immortal spirit.' Forbidding and forbidden folks! Unapproachable to simple human emotions and responses. Of such a one said in '*The Blind Saint*' the Lord:

'When the Heart itself receives no tint,  
what use this tinted robe?'

But in the Swami's case, which is, alas, so rare in the annals of Panditry and devotion, the heart itself had received the tint, long before the robe was tinted, or the tinted robe was donned. And it went much beyond that.

In the grave reverend master in saffron robe I had somehow recovered the lost one, who was taken away from me in her reddish brown wrapping. The scene of parting from the dear departed still lives in my mind. To say that I understood at the age of five or six just exactly what was happening or further what was still going to happen is to say something which is neither here nor there being neither wholly true nor wholly false. Some said she was going on a journey and would soon return. Ah, yes, would soon return!

Whoever said it, was more than a prophet. For a prophet is sure of his words, his pro-



phcey, his vision or peep into the future. In this case the amateur prophet would have been most surprised of all to see his prophecy coming true in a sense, and in a way, he never knew or could have known.

For just two years later (in which 'life had passed with me but roughly,' when I went from pillar to post, and passed from hand to hand, amid people who were kindly and cordial and yet could also be curt and frowning, whose very names I could not dare utter or even call them by their names, such was my inborn fright and bashfulness ;) came new visions and horizons, opening out on a gloom which had depressed me in the midst of general cheerfulness and homely joys of kind and considerate uncle's home. When the other children were being looked after by their doting pappas and mammas, I, although partaking of their cheer and pleasures was yet something, somehow, an 'also-fellow'. The feelings of such an 'also-fellow' of seven are best depicted by the master *haikuist* of Japan, *Bashao*, in his well-known nineteen syllable *haiku*, composed when he was a child of seven or eight, and left alone in the house of the aunt who had taken her children away to the fair and *Bashao* was left sitting on the threshold with a sparrow hopping about :

'Come with each other let us play, little sparrow without any mother !'

But there came, when the gloom was thickest and the need the sorest, not a silver lining to a cloud but a whole panorama of new scenes, new vistas, new virtues, of a great Master in saffron robes, who was so totally different from the others of the saffron-clad fraternity ; who with looks and nods and gifts more than mothered the motherless child, who endeared himself no less by his invisible sympathy as by his gifts of a 'biscuit or a confectionary plum.'

All that happened in Almora, or more correctly Almorah, or phonetically 'Almurh', dear queen of the Kumaun Hills.

## AT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S ABODE IN ALMORA

My father had rented a house or bungalow overlooking the famous Ranidhara spring located on a bluff as you enter the horseshoe bend of the hills, following the cart-road (now motor-road) as you leave Kausani and enter the ups and downs of houses forming the habitations of Almora proper. The bluff commands a view of the snows beyond Bageshwar depression and away to a side are the Kalimat hills. Crowning one end of the horseshoe above the bend, set in shrubbery and some foliage is the Ochterlony Monument, which was an agitated spot during the mornings especially, when the Gurkhas and the kilted Highlanders both, though from the ends of the earth, used to indulge in sham-fights.

My father used to thrill to the sham-fights, perhaps more so than did I. At one point he actually argued with the British Company Commander as to why he did not take the unaware Gurkhas in the rear and fall on their back, to be told by the polite Highlander that he would be only revealing his own position which was not of considerable strength. This incident is only noted as a preliminary to show that in his Himalayan retreat my father was not perforce leading a 'retired' life but was very much alive and alert.

The *dhara* of Ranidhara was not what it was thirty and then forty years later, an exiguous trickle but a big, broad gush of water with plenty of sparkle and spray. And that spray has a niche in my memory : A very voluble *pahari* dame, fills her outsize pitcher at the current, withdraws, I step up and lean forward to the orifice when, lo and behold ! she complains to my father coming up from the rear : 'There, your son has polluted my pitcher with the spray from his hands ! 'Not a bit of it,' and I was on the point of protesting when my father clinched the matter and solved the dispute by asking the

harassed soul the price of a pitcher ; so much, she said. He gave it to her and to my surprise she walked off with the old pitcher too ! 'Won't you leave this behind ?' I asked her ; 'it is no good to you.' 'Of course it is good to me. I shall store grain in it.' And so she rambled away with the spoils of victory. Fifty years a judge, my father knew how to enforce a decision, which was sound, even if the evidence was dubious. The judicial temperament is not one of all poise and repose, but of grim determination. In a subsequent scene, a husband is seen beating his wife on the open street, just in front of his dwelling, or I should say their dwelling, before he turned her out. My father was not the one to rush in where even angels might fear to tread, when a husband and his wife are at logger-heads. So with extreme foresight my father got in front of the couple and raised shouts of 'Police ! Police !' Not a policeman was in sight, but the very fear of the police coming in put a stop to the assault, the estranged couple composed their differences and made themselves scarce.

After the excitements of the mornings and the days, it was the afternoons and the evenings which were undiluted bliss at the abode of peace in the retreat of Swami Vivekananda.

Its exact location and the way thither alike escape me. Not that it very much mattered or matters. I was used to trudging big distances. Eight or nine miles to the Ramsay Collegiate School for day and night classes, with extra mileage thrown in for the morning scampers was good going ; and thereafter to the abode of Swami Vivekananda was also some distance, but it did not entail any extra fatigue or any at all, for I had learnt to look forward to it. On the contrary the extra mileage was covered with extra zest, as it brought extra joy.

My father particularly enjoyed and appreciated this evening outings to Swami Vivekananda's retreat if for no other more abstruse reason than this, which to me was apparent

as it indeed was to all simple fellows, that it brought the Western atmosphere of Europe and America to one who had in those distant lands received something of his larger education. For was it not these that had learnt to shed most of the shackles of caste, custom, tradition, orthodoxy and Ind-fed bigotry ? The dense silver-grey bushy beard which might have done a Sheikh or Sikh great honour had been replaced with a well trimmed fashionable whiskered growth to either side of the jawbone and not too much of it in the style then in vogue ; his mind alert to every current of thought and emotion in the world ; his free-thought and free thinking, which had replaced his orthodoxy, meaning 'you are free to think as you please, but please do your own thinking !'

To such a one was the Swami Vivekananda's society particularly welcome.

To begin with the classless category there was our worthy dollface waxwork Kaul Sahab. I can still see his dark rubicund amethyst face, sharply chiselled, wreathed in smiles and extracting good-humoured fun. Kaul Sahab had not much to do in the way of austerity ; he was a late sleeper and a very late riser, and his day might begin any time after noon, but his candour was compelling ; and he had a 'hail fellow well met' with everybody, which endeared him without being copied. I believe seeing him now and then at the Swami Vivekananda's retreat but I do not think that he made any vigorous contribution to the conversations or debates. Kaul Sahab did not stay very long in Almora ; why exactly he ever came there I do not recall unless it be for this sound reason that he wished to escape the heat of the plains during his first summer on return from Europe and alongside revived old friendships from Europe. In the latter case it speaks volumes to Swami Vivekananda's mansidedness and humanity, charitableness, and attractive power that people of all types and persuasions and stamp were drawn to him

and went away from him with something good, noble, and uplifting. Before autumn snows Kaul Sahab had left for Rajputana to embark on and achieve with distinction a very honourable career as Chief Judge.

With him would come as admirer and friend Shri Badri Dat Pande who was then struggling through the mysteries of Shakespeare for his graduation, and I can still picture Pandeji, with buff-bound copies of Shakespeare's plays such as were set in his course, making for Kaul Sahab's lodging located over the old Railway Depot, which was on the first floor and where I too was a very welcome, self-invited guest, because I loved to watch the weighing bridge from which I would dangle at times, and watch the contacts with the toy train which though lost to sight still was to memory dear. Pandeji would tackle Kaul Sahab in the early hours; Kaul Sahab would be ready for going out in the afternoon. The most obvious suggestion in the evening stroll would be in the direction of Judge Sahab as my father was called, or in the direction of the retreat where Swamiji was there to welcome us.

Pandeji was hoping to get some familiarity with literary England through Kaul Sahab; he got more than familiarity with religious and cultural topics of the world, especially Hindu contribution to world uplift through Swami Vivekananda on the other hand. He may not have realized it, but Pandeji was the gainer. And Pandeji was not an isolated specimen of *homo studiosus* or the student type of humanity. In those days a student of the B.A. class was undoubtedly rare. But he was the observed of all observers and a hero amongst the class boys including myself, perhaps the youngest who eyed with envy. He formed a 'cell' where he would transmit secondhand the inspiration he would derive from England-returned people and the inspiration that he received from the retreat of the Swami Vivekananda.

That in itself was an achievement for the new style student to be got to interest himself

in matters transcending his course and curriculum. Moreover, Swami Vivekananda's English was in itself an education. Volumes could not do justice to his English, so chaste and pure, so mellifluous and smooth-flowing; you caught it with your avid ears and eager mind. Who am I to go to sing its praises, when the mighty intellects assembled at Chicago had been captivated by its charm and sweet persuasiveness? Suffice it to record as the impression of an eight year old youngster that he was understood whenever he spoke, every word, every gesture, every nod, every smile.

I can still imagine him sitting in his saffron robes, saffron turban, and his yellow-rose apricot complexion to which the fine Almora climate had affixed its glowing seal of health, sitting, taking in the various questions, remarks, points addressed to him by his manifold admirers; including such others as might have been against their better judgements, critics, cynics, sceptics, but let there be no misunderstanding! Those who came to scoff remained to pray!

The student world as represented by the two extremes, (Badri Dat Pande the B.A. candidate at one end and the humble IXth standard schoolboy that is myself at the other) were his willing captives and thrilled to the thought that the Swamiji was interested in them. That through him the whole world was likewise interested. That lent an hour's importance to the little fellow's heart. I have had occasion to hear other eminent speakers speak to us as students. Two may be mentioned, but with this clear conviction that neither could equal Swamiji in his persuasive power and accommodating spirit. He seemed to be moulding your mind and spirit as he went along. Those two speakers, each a giant in the giant's way, were Romesh Chandra Dutt and Mrs. Annie Besant.

Romesh Chandra Dutt had rendered yeoman's service to the cause of Hindu revivalism. Already when he lectured to us

in our school and I had the rare distinction of being presented to him we were struck by his supreme erudition which had brought him into the coveted ranks of the Indian Civil Service, or the I.C.S.—which three letters seemed to represent a sort of talisman to many a striving, struggling student, including some impostors who, though studying in the Intermediate Class, would call themselves I.C.S., in other words, Intermediate Class Student (I.C.S.). His *Lays of Ind* were taught to us in the English rendering based on Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* that we should have known to ourselves in the original. But he achieved greatness and sublimity through simplicity and in that respect showed gleams of the light which shone with full blaze in Swami Vivekananda. Typical of the effect he achieved in his *Lays of Ind* may be quoted the line :

'Touch me not with hands unholy, sacred is a woman's hair!' But what R. C. Dutt did to the letter, Swami Vivekananda did to the spirit.

Mrs. Annie Besant was also one who went deep into the spirit of things, but hers was a thwarted soul which found no relief, neither in religion nor in politics, although she shone in both and outshone many a compeer. She approaches, if such contrasted extremes as Omar Khayyam and Annie Besant may be mentioned in the same breath, the picture of frustration and pessimism, put by Omar in the quatrain :

'A falcon I whose Mighty Wing,  
Earth's Highest Treasure o'ersprings,  
But nowhere finds a niche to hold it,  
And flops to earth, poor broken thing !'

Omar stood for *kismet*, static, passive, negative ; Besant for *karma*, positive, dynamic, active ; and yet the sense of disappointment in Besant is acute. She turned from the Rev. Besant and the Christian faith as it did not satisfy her ardent soul. She built up a Hindu revivalism, as she understood it, not as it should have been, and that too did not satisfy her either, or she would not have drifted into

politics, which proved the bane of a beautiful apotheosis. She understood *Shri Bhagavad Gita* in a cold, rational, word-pure way, without thrilling to it in the same dynamic manner as did Mahatma Gandhi, or she would have broken the shackles of politics before they squeezed the marrow out of her hurt soul.

Swami Vivekananda had the sublime simplicity of the one, and the cold intellect of the other, with a vitalizing grace of his own which carried conviction to the meanest and the densest. That explains his great triumph over Western materialism, but I am anticipating, for a boy of eight or nine was not concerned with any 'ism' home or foreign-made.

Turning from the student to the businessman's set represented at the evening gatherings at Swami Vivekananda's abode, must be mentioned in the first and last place Lala Anti Ram Sah, *pahari* banker, agent, supplier, and a sort of 'universal provider' after the style of William Whiteley, whom both my father and Swami Vivekananda must have come to know fairly well in their stay in London. Lala Anti Ram Sah certainly banked for my father, and I have every reason for presuming that he also banked for Swami Vivekananda and particularly for a charming English couple, whom I had come to know under Swami Vivekananda's hospitable and uplifting roof. They had been very much impressed by Swami Vivekananda's eloquence, erudition, spirituality, and above all by his personal magnetism, almost approaching mesmerism, and they had followed him, if my reporter was not a liar, all the way from England to Almora. In fact I am not sure if they had not accompanied him on his way up to this Himalayan retreat. . . .

The circle of devoted friends and admirers who gathered together at the peaceful pleasure-giving and inspiring abode of Swami Vivekananda in the Almora hills is complete except for two who need particular mention, my father and Swami Vivekananda himself, and, of course, myself as their boy-introducer. The

part which I had to play as their unseen or rather unfelt introducer will be apparent as I go along with this narrative.

My father had shed his orthodoxy after a lifelong service according to the stringent rite and ritual in that losing cause. Perhaps I am wrong to call orthodoxy a 'losing cause.' Orthodoxy is not a losing cause; it is those who misapply it, who lose the spirit for the letter, who are losers in consequence. Orthodoxy, like any other 'doxy', is a discipline and needs to be modified and clarified and amplified and rationalized in response to the changes of the changing times.

My father had shed his orthodoxy and filled the vacuum overflowing with humanism, liberalism, freethought of the right type, eclecticism, an inspired agnosticism, I-do-not-know-but-I-am-anxious-to-know-and-I-will-know. He had brought along with him from America a very fine collection of works of enlightenment (*Aufklaerungsbuecher* as the Germans call them) and the library which was weekly expanding with the incoming foreign weekly mail was freely placed at Swami Vivekananda's service.

The books included original or latest editions of Haeckel, Volney, Voltaire, Tom Paine, Wynwood Reade, Darwin, Schopenhauer, etc. Most in demand was the latest India paper complete edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the daily *Pioneer* from Allahabad. Books and papers were taken on loan, read, returned, discussed, digested and cast aside. There was also one mysterious book which I could not understand despite its catchy title: *Madam How and Reason Why*.

Rationalism and Spiritualism as two contrasted poles were under constant discussion and reference. As I was to learn later that purely unadulterated, misguided rationalism had been started by the uninspired and uninspiring English school, which might take Lord Kelvin's dictum for its watchword: 'I can take nothing for understandable and under-

stood so long as I cannot form a mechanical picture of it.' This was rationalism not only to the mind but also to the eye. The contrary and much truer view was taken by the German philosophers represented by Goethe, who said:

'Mysteriously by light of day.

Nature her Veil cannot be made to lose;

And what she will not to your mind display,

You cannot force from her with levers and  
with screws.'

(Goethe's *Faust*, I & II)

Swami Vivekananda—I can still recall his delicate smile for I stood near him—viewed the subject of rationalism with amusement; my father, with bemusement; but Kaul Sahab—I think it was he or some substitute—with approbation. I can still recall the drifts of talk. But I was otherwise engaged. Swami Vivekananda would keep my interest in the proceedings alive 'with a biscuit or a confectionary plum,' as I have quoted from Cowper, earlier. I can still recall his gentle hand playing still more gently with my curls. I can still recall and visualize Swami Vivekananda's deep brown eyes shedding a suffused and subdued warm glow from their finely chiselled orbits, a radiance which might well be compared with the poet's:

'The light that never was on sea or land,  
The inspiration and the poet's dream.'

I can still see that light and that radiance, subduing all, inspiring all, lingering now here, now there, but most of all—how little I realized that benefit, now and then on myself.

'I could not have said then but I could say now:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the  
coming of the Lord!'

Glory is given; glory is received; glory is transmuted. What transmutation has that glory undergone in me? I know it, for I feel it: that there has been a powerful transmutation of that glory. Only I should name the child by its proper name!

It is to the inspiration imbibed without thinking because not understood, or received in all its purity and entirety because there was no shadow of doubt or deception that I feel privileged to claim something of that inner light which has made life worth living and worth serving for.

And it is exactly thanks to the inspiration then received and subsequently garnered and treasured as it came from the lips, hands, gifts, and presence of the Great Master that I have been able to realize something of the meaning of the *Gita* and can carry that meaning with me wherever I go and propagate its message to alien lands and in alien people.

To the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome must be added the Light that was, and is Almora. A light transcending both, Glory and Grandeur. For Glory blinds and dazzles; Grandeur begins and ends in vanity; but Light guides, philosophizes, and befriends.

The light that Vivekananda was irradiating shone with equal glow, whether seen through the coloured glasses of mysticism or of faith or of both. Whatever the individual prismatic hues one fastens on at a time or successively or simultaneously, that light is one, whole, entire, overwhelming.

I go back to my childhood days, my boyhood reactions, as I stood repeatedly, perhaps closest of all, bathing in that light, imbibing

unseen, unfelt, unconscious, all the inner strength that has carried me since through and over the thorns of life, on a course which might well have been by him and to him set.

I have not belonged to any denomination nor borne any labels, nor joined any lodges, masonic or otherwise. Herein I have followed my father's dictum, when he answered the repeated calls of friends to join a masonic lodge: 'I belong to the brotherhood of Man.'

And so I appreciated the friend I had found in Swami Vivekananda, friend and more than friend, guide and philosopher, all the more; and I carry his vision of enlightened face before the eyes, more vividly than on print or picture. And later on in life I have found in the philosopher Nietzsche some lines which can truly interpret my own devotion to the Master from my childhood times:

'... Deep glows within my breath of fire :  
The Inscript : 'To the Unknown Friend.'  
Yours am I, howsoe'er I went  
The Path of Sin and World-Desire.  
Yours am I even as I go under,  
Unequal to a strife unjust,  
And yet I render  
Service to you, for I must.  
Will-bound, spell-bound, I take my stand,  
Here where the ways divide and part,  
Most certain in my inmost heart,  
Go where I will, you hold my hand !'

## SOME ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

BY DR M. HAFIZ SYED

In the present day, on account of political upheavals and lack of good understanding. Islam, unlike other religions, is greatly misunderstood in many quarters. People have begun to doubt whether it has any spiritual or moral value or not. There is no religion in

this world, ancient or modern, revealed by God and sent through His messengers to all mankind which lacks spiritual inspiration and moral vitality. Islam is no exception to it. Every religion worth the name has had and should have the exoteric and esoteric sides to

it. God and soul remain mere names to such of us as have not learnt to realize their inner intrinsic meaning. It is only by living a life of purity, chastity, truth, non-violence, and austerity that one becomes fit enough to tread the path of spiritual realization, which in course of time enables the aspirant to understand what human soul and God are.

The divinity of man and his close relation with the Supreme Reality are more or less acknowledged by almost all the religions of the world. A devout Muslim who has full faith in the tenets of Islam and its pristine purity has to observe its outer form, and, therefore, he does not own his divine nature publicly, but when the same devotee learns to dive deeper into his own being and grasps the divine essence in him, he treats the fact of his divinity as a secret over which he has to keep silence and which he can convey only to those who are his fellow-travellers on the path. This knowledge of spiritual wisdom is conveyed from 'breast to breast' and not talked about. This is an old tradition of Islam. The idea underlying this secrecy is that the peace of public mind should not be disturbed. The majority of the people are expected to lead a moral life as laid down by Islam in their everyday life and acknowledge their relation to God as a humble creature and regard Him as the Source of his being, the Supreme Creator, Master, and Patron.

The conception of the Unity of God is the pivot round which revolve all other doctrines. The oneness of God is acknowledged by all the schools of mysticism. The pure existence of the Supreme Reality is called *Zat*, without any reference to His attributes. It is known through its qualities and attributes called *Ism-e-sifat*. The neophyte is expected to meditate on Divine attributes and through his constant meditation, prayerfulness, and single-minded devotion, a glimpse of His Beauty, Greatness, and Grandeur is vouchsafed to him. The aspirant is enjoined to draw a curtain over his mind

against *Masewa*, that which is not God, and desire nothing but Him and the ability to do His will, which is another name of Islam which really and literally means complete resignation and surrender to the will of God—an attitude which is to him the only ruling idea of his life. He owes allegiance to no other being. He bows down before none, kneels down before the Almighty Allah who is his sole Refuge, Benefactor, and Supreme Master,

The first step enjoined by Islam for the attainment of this goal is five times' prayer, a full month's fast once a year, sharing at least one-fortieth of one's property with poor and indigent persons, and performing a pilgrimage to Mecca called Hajj. The second step is constant repetition of God's name, mentally and verbally, and meditation on Him and His Qualities. In order fully to succeed in his effort of spiritual realization he has to seek the help and guidance of a *murshid* or teacher, to whom he offers his utmost devotion and who in his turn initiates him into the mysteries of divine wisdom and takes him along from one step to another in the sphere of spiritual development. In this connexion three kinds of meditations are practised. The first is called *Tasawwur-e-Shaikh* (meditation on one's teacher), the second, *Tasawwur-e-Rasul* (meditation on the Prophet), the third, *Tasawwur-e-Allah* (meditation on God). Thus an aspirant is led from one step to the other systematically till he attains His grace and an insight into the mystery of Divine Wisdom.

It may be noted here that the methods and stages of spiritual realization laid down by Islam bear close resemblance to some of the schools of ancient Hindu thought.

#### THE SUFI DOCTRINE OF THE UNITY OF GODHEAD

The Muslim mystics are agreed that God is One, Alone, Single, Eternal, Everlasting, Knowing, Powerful, Mighty, Majestic, Generous, Clement, Master, Merciful and

Compassionate; that He is qualified with all the attributes and named with all the best names; that since eternity He has not ceased to continue with His name and attributes; that there is no eternal but He and no God besides Him; that He is neither body, nor shape, nor form, nor person, nor element, nor accident. One of the great Sufis says, 'He is hidden in His manifestation, manifest in concealing. He is outward and inward, near and far; and in this respect He is removed beyond the resemblance of creature. They are agreed that He is neither perceived by the eyes, nor assailed by the thought, that his attributes do not change, and that His names do not alter; that He is First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward, that He is acquainted with everything, that there is nothing like Him, and that He sees and hears.' (*The Doctrine of the Sufis* pp. 14, Cambridge Press).

It may be added that all these statements about the Godhead have their Qur'anic sanctions, too numerous to be quoted here.

The most manifest of existences is the Existence of God. The existence of things is by the light of God. The perception of yourself is the perception of God. He who has understood his *Nafs* (Real Self) has understood his God. The Reality of God is His existence which is really His *Dhat*. The Absolute existence has no form, no shape, no limitations, neither beginning nor end; and in spite of this He has manifested Himself in different shapes without any change in His *Dhat*. It is like a person surrounded by mirrors of different sizes and colours and appearing differently in them without any change in His own personality.

Dhunnun-e-Misri has said, *Al ilmu fi dhat Illahi jehlun*. Knowledge in God's *Dhat* is ignorance. No prophet or *Wali* has ever reached or will ever reach that point. The Prophet has said: *Ma arafnaka haqqa merifatika* 'I have not known Thee to the extent that Thy knowledge demands.' The

Sufis believe that God has two aspects: (1) *Tanzih*, corresponding to Nirguna Brahman and (2) *Tashbih*, corresponding to Saguna Brahman. They also believe that He is both present and absent, both the One and the Many. He thus joins in Himself contraries and contradictories.

### GOD'S ATTRIBUTES (*Sifat*)

Prophet Muhammad once said, 'I am from the light of God and all things are from my light.' Truly God is beautiful and He loves beauty. Beauty is the personal attribute of the *Zat*. God created man in His own face, says the Sufi. He clothed him with His own attribute of beauty. Man is therefore inclined to the beautiful. God was thus Beauty and Love. His beauty was love, and his love was beauty. He was the lover and beloved at the same time. He saw himself in the mirror of His own beauty. He loved Himself (*La yahibulla*). God does not love 'other than Himself', (*The Doctrine of Sufis*, pp. 16 & 17, Cambridge Press).

### THE GUIDE (*Pir*)

The *Murid* (disciple) must observe the *jamal* (beauty and grandeur of *Pir*). The *Pir's jamal* must be reflected in the mirror of the *murid's* heart. 'Whoever hath seen me hath seen God,' says the Prophet. 'The reality of *iman* is the observance of me,' says the Prophet.

Shayk-i-Akbar says that a *murid* who seeks another *pir* during the life-time of his own *pir* breaks his covenant with God, which he made at the time of performing *byat* (initiation). The follower of one prophet cannot become a follower of another, during the former's life-time.

The objects of *shagal* (practice), *zikr* (repetition of God's name), and *muraqaba* (deep meditation) are to enable the mind not to retain in itself the remembrance of other-than-God. The beginner should not be estranged from the path. After the purity



of heart is established, all defects will disappear of themselves.

The *shaykh* (guide) can be in the west and aware of the condition of his *murid* (disciple) in the east. The least capacity of the *pir* is that he possesses *kshaf-i-qulub* (that is, he reads the minds of his *murids*) and *Kshaf-e-qubur* (that he is conscious of the condition of the dead in the grave). If he has not this capacity, it is forbidden for him to accept any one as his disciple. He should know the past and future conditions of the world. He is the *Khalifa* of God on earth. We have made him, says the *Quran*, vicegerent on earth (*Suratu'l Baqarah*, II. 30).

Abu Yazid-i-Bistami had twelve *pirs* in succession. In fact, all *pirs* are the manifestation of the Name, *Al-Hadi*. *Murid* shows extreme respect to his *pir*—not as in hero worship but as a mark of his love.

*Murids* (disciples) are of two kinds : ordinary and special. The *pir* instructs them in different ways, according to their aptitudes and temperaments ; the one gets ordinary instructions, and the other gets instructions that are kept back from the ordinary *murid*. 'Shariat is my words, *tariqat* is my actions and *haqiqat* is my personal condition,' said the Prophet (peace on him). *Al shariatu aqwali, wal triqatu afali wal haqiqatu ahwali*.

Abu Yazid-i-Bistami and Uthman-i-Khybari were saying their prayers together ; the latter concluded his prayer thus : 'O, God, grant all that I desire,' and the former concluded ; 'O, God, cut off all that I desire.' Uthman said, 'How is this ?' Abu Yazid said, 'What has a seeker after God to do with the desires of his *nafs* ? He relinquishes all *ma-siwalah* (other-than-God) and forgets his own existence.' (*Irshadat S. Gazur-i-Ilahi*).

### PERFECTION OF MAN

The question of perfection of man, according to Muslim mystics might be answered in different ways. In a word a perfect man may be defined as a man who has fully realized

his essential oneness with the Divine being in whose likeness he is made. This exalted position as enjoyed by prophets and saints and shadowed forth in symbols to others, is the foundation of the Sufi theosophy. Therefore, the class of perfect men comprised not only the Prophets, from Adam to Muhammad, but also the superlatively elect amongst the Sufis, that is the persons named collectively *awaliya*. Since the *wali* or saint is the popular type of perfect man it should be understood that the essence of Muslim saintship, as of prophecy, is nothing less than Divine Illumination, immediate vision and knowledge of things unseen and unknown, when the veil of sense is suddenly lifted and the conscious self passes away in the overwhelming glory of one True Light. It may be noted that an ecstatic feeling of oneness with God constitutes the *wali*. It is the end of the path, and prepares the disciple to receive this incalculable gift of Divine grace, which is not gained or lost by anything that a man may do, but comes to him in proportion to the spiritual capacity with which he was created. (The Perfect Man, Chapter II, page 78, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* by Nicholson, Cambridge Press).

### SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUFI SYSTEM

It may be added that the knowledge of Divine wisdom is available to those alone whose eyes are fixed, like an archer on the arrow, on the object at which he aims, and that without purity of purpose and unceasing effort, deliverance or salvation cannot be obtained.

In all ages and in all times men have sought and found truth. They have shown the way and means of attainment. But men have listened to the message with incredulity and continued the mad pursuit of sense objects. Passion of body and mind govern men and kindle fires of desire, of greed, attachment, egoism, and anger. These enslave and obscure the mind which must be freed and restored

to its pristine purity to reflect Truth. According to the Muslim mystics the seekers of truth, therefore, concentrate all their strength in driving away from the mind all sense objects and setting it free from the domination of fear and hate. Some mystics follow the path of knowledge, and others the path of devotion, hoping to lose all sense of duality in the supreme experience of love. The world-forsakers are something of an enigma to world-seekers. The truth is that a Sufi gives up that which has no real value.

'Muslim mystics declare life to be a journey over an unknown path which is as straight and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker, no

sustenance but devotion. The track ahead cannot be seen, going is uncertain, and pitfalls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a candle to grope in the gloom or seek the rush light of reason. He must go steadily forward in the hope of reaching a great illumination which awaits him at the journey's end. It would profit little to dwell on the system of Sufism. Volumes have been written in Persian and other languages on the subject. It is not a system really, it is a way of life. It is beyond the range of reason. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realised.' (*The Persian mystics*, pp. 14 & 15).

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

We are interrupting the series *The Western Question* this month for the present editorial, *Reflections on National Independence*. The series will be resumed from the next month ...

*The March of History* by P. S. Naidu represents the two Miller Endowment Lectures delivered by the author at Madras on January 4 and 5, 1946. Under the terms of the Endowment the subject should be one dealing with the exposition of 'The meaning of Human History as disclosing the one increasing purpose that runs through the Ages.' In these lectures Prof. Naidu gives a spiritual interpretation of world history by a rapid survey of civilization, past and present, in terms of Indian conceptions. He points out the inadequacy of the different philosophies of history and principles of social evolution which ignore the supreme spiritual factor of God or Brahman. He concludes, and rightly so, that Indian culture alone holds the key to the final unification of mankind. The lectures

will appear in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in four instalments, of which the present one is the first. ...

*Introduction to the Study of the Upanishads* (III) is the last instalment of the series. The book will be shortly published in India. ...

*Some Aspects of Islamic Mysticism* by Dr M. Hafiz Syed shows a side of Islam that is generally hidden from common view and almost lies submerged under the main tradition of the popular religion.

### SANSKRIT AND THE INDIAN MIND

We are in the habit of saying, among other things, that the leadership of India should come from the soil. Generally it is taken to mean that leaders should arise not from the city-dwelling intelligentsia and commercial people, who are often economic and political superfluities rendering nothing or very little in return for what they take from the community, but from the common people of the countryside who toil and moil and

keep society going by their labour. Such men alone can make national politics truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the country. As things are, the masses are still mostly ignorant and voiceless and are led by people whose interests and outlook cannot be identical with theirs. In a country like India where the vast majority of its inhabitants dwell in villages and live by agriculture, one should expect national politics to be greatly influenced by the interests and ideas of these people. Can we say it is so?

Of course, it will be wrong to say that our politics do not reflect peasant needs at all, for there are many who have tried to understand the peasants' problems and whose aim is to improve their standard of living. Still it cannot be questioned that if the peasants were intelligent and vocal and could bring all their legitimate weight to the political field, national policies would have taken other turns.

While this is clear, there is a deeper sense in which the statement is true. The peasant is rooted not only in a material soil but also a cultural soil. In order to make them strong and happy and in order to develop in them the habits and the capacity for moral judgment, required of its citizens by a democracy, we should know their mind and ways of thinking. A leadership which understands their material needs but fails to take account of their cultural basis will either be ineffective or make for chaos. Unfortunately, there are many in the political field who understand economic theories and the business of government but have no acquaintance with the soul of India. This is mainly the result of a defective education. A true leader of India must have adequate knowledge of the true values of her culture. We cannot expect of politicians and administrators whose knowledge is confined solely to Western history, politics, science, or vague generalities about that much abused abstract noun humanity to understand or view with sympathy the institutions which have held society together

and given the people of the country that moral and spiritual nourishment for centuries without which everything would have been lost.

One of the ways in which the youth can be introduced to the true spirit of our culture is the widespread study of Sanskrit. In the course of an interesting article on *Bhaskara's Leelavathi: Its Cultural Importance* in the *Aryan Path* July 1949 Shri K.S. Nagarajan, the writer, says:

'To evaluate properly its cultural importance, some understanding of the vitality and persistence of Sanskrit and of the rich cultural heritage of ancient India is necessary. These have greatly influenced the Indian social and economic structure, though Indian mathematics and the glory of Indian womanhood suffered a set-back from the foreign invasions from which we have not yet been able to recover. Sanskrit, once the language of the people, helps one to think, act and speak nobly. We shall be doing a great disservice to our country if we neglect the study of that celestial language, necessary for the revival of India's ancient glory. Now that India is free, a revival of Sanskrit study, combined with substantial progress in the discovery of ancient relics, and the unearthing of some of the mighty works of the past which indicate the progress made in the exact sciences, must be commenced in earnest. ...

'Bhaskara's *Leelavathi* is not the only work which plays an important role in the cultural history of India. There may be many more such works which should be discovered by the earnest efforts of research scholars taking to the study and popularisation of Sanskrit without further delay. Such works enhance the prestige and glory of India in the eyes of the world. Let me close this short article with this fond hope: May the beautiful Sanskrit language flourish in Independent India with renewed splendour, delighting our minds.'

Encouragement of the study of Sanskrit

among all the elements of our population should be a main concern of national politics. The tremendous potentialities the study of Sanskrit holds for the growth of a healthy and integrated national life are beyond all imagination at present.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**BUDDHI YOGA OF THE GITA OR THE BASIC SCIENCE OF THE SOUL.** By MAGDAL RAMACHANDRA. Published by the author from *Gitaashram, Chamrajpet, Bangalore 4*: Pp. Sixtytwo+248+56. Price Rs. 4/8.

Ever since the *Gita* was preached it has been holding the attention and interest of people of varied temperaments and in various walks of life. Many are the commentaries upon its teaching, each commentator interpreting it in the light of his own experience or understanding. And such a course is inevitable, for one can give only what one has grasped of it in the absence of direct contact with its original preacher. Yet, a detached study with an open mind, free from prejudices and preconceptions, can help much in arriving at the truth. This is what the author of the *Buddhi Yoga of the Gita* claims to do. He depends for the meaning of technical words used in the *Gita* on the definitions given in the *Gita* itself. Apart from the other merits of this book we must say that any attempt to confine the *Gita* to any one scheme of interpretation is futile, except as a purely scholastic feat to force its teaching into a strait jacket—supposing it were possible—for such attempts tend to confine to a few what is meant for all. Each one sees a facet only of the truth. As such, though there may be apparent conflict between these various views, which the author points out, the conflict is not between the *Gita* and its different votaries. After all the *Gita* may be multi-purposed. It must be remembered any sublime idea has the capacity to give inspiration in different and new ways to different people which its author himself might not have realized.

Still, the *Buddhi Yoga of the Gita* is a welcome publication providing another and a somewhat new and original line of thought regarding the teaching of the *Gita*. The author gives an elaborate introduction to the study of the *Gita* as *Buddhi Yoga*, a simple English translation of the verses with copious notes and comments, a glossary and the text of the *Gita* in *devanagari* at the end. Here *Buddhi* is used not in the sense of the pure intuitive Reason which apprehends Reality, but in the sense of purified intuitive intellect which surrenders itself to the highest personified aspect of

this Reality as the *Purushottama*, the Overlord of all creation.

A large number of printing mistakes have crept in which we hope will be rectified in the next edition.

**GOODWILL MESSAGES TO INDIA.** By Dr. TAI CHI-TAO. Published by *The Sino-Indian Cultural Society in India, Santiniketan, West Bengal*. Pp. 14. Price As. 8.

H. E. Dr. Tai Chi-Tao, a great political and cultural leader and literary figure of China, who was the right-hand man of Dr Sun Yat-Sen and an exponent of his ideas, was invited in 1946 by various institutions in India. He accepted the invitations, but at the last moment illness prevented him from undertaking the journey. So he sent his goodwill messages to these institutions, namely, The Benares Hindu University; The Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan; The Sino-Indian Cultural Society of India; The Mahabodhi Society of India; The Calcutta Art Society; and The Oriental Cultural Conference, Calcutta. These messages have been published with a view to promote goodwill between India and China.

The pamphlet contains a short biographical sketch of H. E. Dr Tai Chi-Tao by Mr Tan Yun-Shan. The messages trace the cultural relations between India and China and bear the impress of the great scholarship and character of the author.

**THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE (CHAMPAGNE—LOIRE—SARTHE).** By MISS INDIRA SIRKAR, M.A. *Calcutta Oriental Book Agency, 9, Panchanan Ghose Lane, Calcutta*. Pp. 19. Price Re. 1/-

This booklet by Miss Indira Sirkar, authoress of a few brochures on French life and thought, contains three letters to her mother giving an account of her visit to Champagne, Loire, and Sarthe in France. They throw interesting sidelight on the French life of today. Though as letters from a daughter to her mother they are fine, a recasting of the material with more details regarding the natural surroundings of the countryside and about the life and culture of the village folk in general would make the book more useful to the general public.

The price of the pamphlet is rather too high.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI

FOUNDATION LAYING CEREMONY OF THE NEW CHARITABLE DISPENSARY BUILDING & THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FREE T. B. CLINIC.

Shri Shankar Prasad, Chief Commissioner, Delhi, laid on May 1, 1949 the foundation-stone of the new building, in the Ramakrishna Mission premises at New Delhi, to accommodate the Charitable Dispensary, and the Free Library & Reading Room which are now housed in the living quarters of the monastery and lack sufficient accommodation.

Before the laying of the foundation-stone Swami Gangeshananda, Secretary of the Mission at Delhi, gave a brief account of the history of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Delhi Branch. The Dispensary and the Library & Reading Room were started when the Delhi Branch was established in 1927. About 22,000 cases are treated annually in the Dispensary. The Library has 2500 volumes, and the Reading Room gets six dailies and 33 periodicals. The cost of construction of the new building is estimated at Rs. 40-45,000 of which the Mission has already collected Rs. 15,000 and hopes that generous people will come forward with donations to meet the rest.

Shri Shankar Prasad in his speech pointed out, among other things, that at present the refugee problem—their proper rehabilitation, education and medical welfare—was an urgent one. He said that the missionary bodies like the Ramakrishna Mission with the true spirit of service could do a great deal in helping the Government to tackle this gigantic problem. Concluding Shri Shankar Prasad paid a tribute to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission and hoped that the Dispensary, and the Library & Reading Room would render great service to the citizens of Delhi.

On May 4, 1949 the Opening Ceremony of the new building of the Free T. B. Clinic of the Mission at Karolbagh was performed by the Hon'ble Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, India's Health Minister.

Swami Gangeshananda gave a brief account of the origin and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, its Delhi Branch, and a history of the T. B. Clinic.

The Ramakrishna Mission, established by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, has been doing immense service to the country through its religious, cultural, educational and medical activities as well as through its famine, flood and other relief works. It depends solely on public help to carry on its activities. At present there are 111 centres of the Mission working in the country and 21 abroad. The activities of the Delhi branch of the Mission include organization of religious and spiritual dis-

courses, lectures, *bhajans*, celebrations of the anniversaries of great men and saints of all religions and creeds, and dissemination of their teachings for comparative understanding, maintenance of a free reading room and library, a charitable dispensary at the Mission premises and a free tuberculosis clinic. Last year, this centre organized relief work at the Kurukshetra Relief Camp.

The Free T. B. Clinic was opened in 1933 at Paharganj, thanks mainly to the voluntary services of some noble-minded gentlemen, highly qualified in the treatment of T. B. In 1934 the clinic was shifted to Daryaganj to a more commodious building which also was found insufficient for the purpose as the work increased in scope and quantity. The construction of the new building was started in 1941, which, after being interrupted during the war years, has now been completed with the help of the Government and the public. The construction cost Rs. 1,07,800, of which Rs. 40,000 were contributed by the Government of India. The cost of equipping the clinic with X-Ray, Laboratory, surgical instruments, furniture, etc. was estimated at Rs. 72,000 and the Government has met 75% of this amount. The Government has also made a grant of Rs. 14,200 towards running expenses of the clinic for 1949-50 which were estimated at Rs. 33,670. Though the clinic is newly started in this area the number of cases treated went up to 2,491 for the month of March 1949. At present the clinic has 16 observation beds. The clinic has also undertaken, besides its normal activities, the Home Treatment Scheme, to serve those who are unable to attend the clinic in person. The cost of the scheme is fully met by the Government through the Provincial Tuberculosis Association.

Performing the Opening Ceremony of the Clinic Rajkumari Amrit Kaur asked the people to fight in every way the deadly disease of tuberculosis which is taking a heavy toll in India. She also detailed the plans of the Government of India in this respect and dwelt broadly on the cause of the spread of T. B. and the methods for its prevention. She also remarked: 'Partition and our responsibilities in Kashmir and Hyderabad have strained our financial resources to the utmost, and since health is a spending department it is not possible for my Ministry to get all the financial aid that I would fain have to carry out my many projects.' Earlier she said, 'Today I could fill the T. B. hospital in Kingsway and all the other sanatoria whether run by the provincial Governments or by the Central Government twice over, so that it is obvious how dire is the need for further expansion in the matter of T. B. dispensaries and clinics and sanatoria.'

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SEPTEMBER 1949

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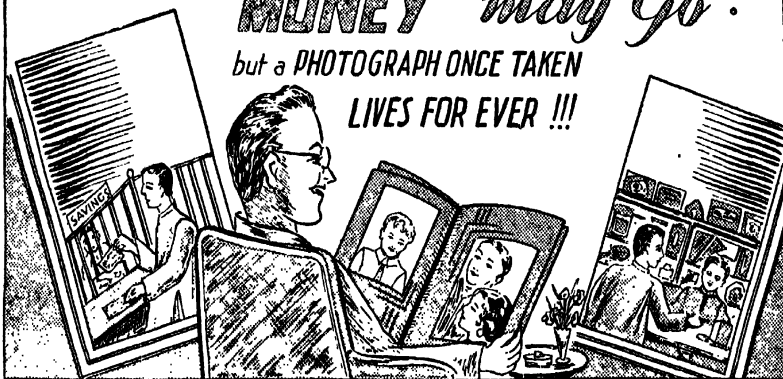
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“वत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELURMATH, 7 DECEMBER 1929

It was morning. A sannyasin of the Math had gone to Kashmir in spite of the severe winter. Mahapurush Maharaj remarked on this :

‘P. has gone to Kashmir in the winter. I hear he has walked there all the way from Hrishikesh. Since hearing this my mind is very worried. O Master, save him; he has taken refuge in you. I think something is wrong with his head, or else why should he make such a decision? Does anybody go to Kashmir at this time?’ He remained silent for a while, and then went on: ‘My child! this road is very difficult. This business of *brahmavidya*, the science of Brahman, is extremely arduous. Not all minds can form a conception of it which is the subtlest of the subtle. It is comparatively easy to acquire phenomenal knowledge, say to become a great philosopher, or a great scientist, a great poet, or artist, or statesman, but it is very difficult to acquire the knowledge of Brahman. So the *Upanishad* says: “The wise declare that the road to Brahman is

sharp and difficult like the razor’s edge.” Those who have not taken to this life cannot have the faintest notion about the obstacles in this path. The *Upanishad* calls this knowledge of Brahman the supreme knowledge by which the Imperishable Godhead is known, and speaks of all phenomenal knowledge as the lower knowledge. Absolute chastity is necessary for the acquisition of this supreme knowledge. As a result of long observance of chastity in thought, word, and deed there develops in the body and mind an ability to conceive the pure idea of the Godhead or Brahman; new neural paths are opened in the head, and the whole body, down to its minutest particles, becomes transformed. Unbroken chastity is essential. The Master would say, “One is afraid to keep milk in a curd pot, lest it should turn sour.” That is why he used to love the pure-hearted boys so much. They alone can form a true conception of the Godhead. These are very subtle things. Of course, the thing necessary, above all, is the grace of God. Without the special grace of the Divine Mother nothing at all in

this line can be achieved. Only if She opens, out of her mercy, the gate of the knowledge of Brahman, can a *jiva* attain that knowledge, not otherwise. The *Chandi* says: *saisha prasanna varada nrinam bhavati muktaye*. "She, when pleased, grants the boon of Liberation to men." There are so many fine nerve cells in the brain. If even a few of these go wrong, all is lost. The Holy Mother used to say: "Pray to the Master that the head may not go wrong. If the head goes wrong, everything is finished." ...

'When P. first came to the Math, no sooner did I see his head than the thought came to me that he would go mad. I heard that he had been learning *hathayoga* at Hrishikesh. All this, my child, is not good. Apart from this, he was aimlessly moving about from place to place outside, and maintained no connection with the *sadhus* of the Math; he went about doing as he liked. Now you see, he has gone off his head. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) also would say that it is not at all safe for a *sadhu* in the beginning to remain absolutely alone. At least two should be together. And, further, does that sort of life make for *tapasya*? Is *tapasya* done by simply running about in mountains and forests, or at Hrishikesh and Uttarakashi?'

Remaining silent for a while, he said, 'O Master, save your child; he has taken refuge in you. If you do not save him, who will? Poor boy! He was very good!'

A Brahmachari: The *Uddhava-Gita* in the *Bhagavat*a says that it is very difficult for a *sadhaka* to make progress in the spiritual path. Supernal beings, planets, diseases, relations, etc. create in various ways tremendous obstructions for the *sadhaka*.

Mahapurushji: All obstructions, whatever their nature, vanish if the Divine grace can be had. The Master can abrogate one's fate. If one takes refuge in Him, all impediments, physical or non-physical, are removed. The *Chandi* says:

*Rogān aśheshānapahamsi tushtā rushtā tu kāmān sakalānabhishtān*

*Tam āshritānām na vipannarānām tvāmāshritā hyāshrayatām prayānti.*

"O Mother, when pleased, you destroy all diseases, and when displeased, you frustrate cherished desires. There is no more danger for those who have been sheltered by you; they become in turn the refuge of others."

There is another way. It is the company of the good; this saves men. Holy company is very necessary. Thousands of men try, but only one or two attain the Truth. Someone asked Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), "How can one have love for God?" To this Maharaj replied, "Holy company, holy company and holy company." The great sages introduce men to God. Holy company is necessary, my son; holy company is necessary. All the scriptures have greatly praised holy company.'

The Brahmachari: The *Ramayana* speaks of the blessings of the *rishis* who were like fire.

Mahapurushji: 'You are right. Sri Ramachandra made preparations for the destruction of the *rakshasas* after he had received the blessings of the fire-like *rishis*. Then he repeated the words "*satām sanga—holy company*" a number of times. Finally he said: 'But then, do you know what it is, after all? Whatever be the other conditions, nothing can be achieved without the grace of the Divine Mother. One can be safe if only She, being pleased, allows one to go beyond Her realm of *maya*. There is no other help. Grace, grace, and grace! And if one is sincere, She does become gracious.'

BELURMATH, 9 AUGUST 1929

Today Swami ... is returning to Madras. He came early in the morning and prostrated himself before Mahapurush Maharaj who said:

'To day Y... is leaving. This time you stayed at the Math for a long time. You are going now; that is all right. You are devotees of the Master; wherever you go, the

Master will be with you. Wherever His devotees are, He also is there with them.' ....

Subsequently, in the course of a talk with Swami ... on many important matters regarding the Order, Mahapurush Maharaj said :

*'Satyameva jayate nānritam,* "Truth alone triumphs, falsehood never." Truth has always been victorious, and, my child, this will happen ever afterwards. All this is the play of the Divine Power. After giving up the gross body, the Master is now living in the Order. Now He exists as the Order—these are the words of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). The fact that all of you, devotees, have come from distant centres and met together will have a very good result. The Master sometimes shakes up the whole organization to show that He is still guarding the Order and will do so in future. Swamiji himself has organized this Order according to the Master's intention and has laid upon it the tremendous responsibility of preaching the Master's broad spiritual conception all over the world. None will be able to harm this Order, know it for certain. If anybody ever comes with wrong ideas, the Master will turn his mind round. He will give everybody the right understanding, even if that requires throwing him first into adverse situations. To err is human. Man is so poor of understanding. But He is merciful to all. The sinner and the afflicted—no one is deprived of His mercy. Swamiji has said, hasn't he? *"Āchandālāpratihataraṇo yaśya premapravāhaḥ"* etc. He came down in the form of Sri Ramakrishna to redeem all, down to the *chandala*, the outcaste. You have read about Jesus Christ. He prayed with a tender heart to the Father of all for forgiveness to those who had crucified him : "Father,

forgive them for they know not what they do." That Parabrahman (Supreme Godhead) came down this time as Sri Ramakrishna. We have seen with our own eyes his limitless and wonderful forgiveness. And the Holy Mother—there can be nothing comparable to Her. She was the very Mother of the Universe. We have heard of this incident : One day someone came to the Mother complaining that one of her disciples had committed a most heinous act. Mother listened to everything. After that, when he said : "If you call him to you and say a few words about this, it will do him good." Mother replied : "My son, you can do so, but I am the Mother. All are equal in my sight. He may be a great delinquent and vicious in your eyes, but not so to his mother. How can I, being a mother, despise my son?" Such was the forgiveness of Mother. All this has happened before our eyes and we have also learnt that lesson. We have to learn from the lives of the Master, Mother, and Swamiji.'

As he was saying this, Mahapurushji's voice became almost choked with feeling and he could not say anything more. Remaining silent for a while, he broke out into a song :

'Sing of the Ruler of the Universe, the Adored of all, Brahman, the Eternal and Destroyer of all sin.

The One Providence of the three worlds, Ocean of Mercy, Beautiful, and the Guide of all.

He is the Delight of the devotee's mind, Giver of good and Dispenser of knowledge, prosperity and intelligence.

The devotee prays for your feet with folded hands, pour the moon-light of your love on the *chakora* \* bird of his heart.'

\* A legendary night-bird that drinks moonlight.

Iron touched by the philosopher's stone is transformed into gold. The waters of the road being mixed with those of the Ganges become pure. In like manner, O Mother, being attached through devotion to Thee, will not my heart become pure, greatly soiled though it be by many taints?

—Sri Sankaracharya, *Anandalahari*



## THE WESTERN QUESTION (VII)

By THE EDITOR

We have so far taken into our survey the period of Indian history that stretches from its very beginnings right up to the eve of the advent of Islam. The survey, it must be noted, is very broad. In thus trying to help ourselves through the jungle of historical facts we have relied on a pattern. Before we proceed on to the next stage it will be well if we examine this pattern a little more closely. Historical investigation must not be a mere academic delight, but should be of practical help to us in individual and collective life. Unfortunately, history never explains itself, nor does it teach a lesson. It is we who superimpose an explanation upon it and it is we who draw a lesson from its happenings.

In the present series of articles we have been trying, above all, to bring to the fore the intimate relationship that subsists between history and religion. This is one of the fundamental conceptions to which the Indian mind has adhered since the very beginning of the drama of Indian life. India has always held firmly to the conviction that there is a moral element in the very structure of the universe; she has made religion central in her thinking. The moral factor operates not only in biography but also in history. To have a comprehensive understanding of the drift and purpose of life we have to see all our problems and experiences, personal as well as collective, in moral terms. The grand happenings of history on a colossal scale as well as the vicissitudes of individual life are laid on the same plan; they follow a similar pattern. What is in the *pinda* (microcosm), is also in the *Brahmāṇḍa* (macrocosm). A spiritual element lies embedded in all the processes of time. There is something in the very composition of the universe which executes moral judgment upon actions which fly in the face of a

Providential purpose. This conception of a spiritual meaning of history enters deeply into the texture of the Indian religious thought.

The vedic Aryans who created this civilization of ours conceived life and universe in moral terms. *Rita* stands for both physical and moral order. While necessity reigns supreme in the physical realm, the moral order admits of freedom of the individual. Taking facts as they are on the practical plane we cannot but pay due regard to these principles. In the moral order individuals are given a choice, arising out of the practical sense of freedom, to march with the true intention of history or against it. By cooperating with the Divine, or, to put it better, by becoming instruments of the Providential purpose, we fulfil ourselves and help the fulfilment of others; by fighting against it we retard our growth and produce cataclysms. The Divine ordinarily remains veiled as the secret urge in material happenings. But there are occasions, when history becomes catastrophic, on which the Divine breaks into the story and steps right on to the stage of human drama. The Divine intervention becomes obvert and direct. *Yadā yadāhi* ....—Whenever vice prevails and virtue declines the Lord incarnates Himself in human form to destroy evil and to establish righteousness. History is not without purpose, and the purpose is moral.

The new motto of the State which the Indian Government has so wisely adopted is a very well-known vedic dictum, *Satyameva jayate nānritam*: Truth alone prevails, falsehood never. The Epics sum up the moral judgment of history in the words: *yato dharmastato jayah*, victory always belongs to the righteous. Not victory alone, but peace and prosperity also come to those

who have the faith and patience to rely on Providence and stick to the right course. This conception has come to be challenged in modern India among the educated in a way it never was done in the past. They say : 'Look and behold ! what religion and reliance on God have given us except superstition and poverty, weakness and degeneration ? The West is rich, strong and happy and rules over the world ; we are poor, weak and miserable and at its mercy.' Perhaps the complaint is not so bitter now as it was before. But it is still there. This, we hold, arises from a false, secular conception of history which the godless education of modern times has instilled into the minds of its pupils. We challenge this view even on mundane grounds. We have taken the line that even the very secular phenomena of history cannot be properly explained without the interpolation of a supernatural element. For example, we cannot explain the consistent, though long-term, victory of truth and tolerance over falsehood and fanaticism, unless we admit of a spiritual principle back of matter. If we do not do so we shall be thrown upon Chance. A nation which takes to the creed of chance is doomed to paralysis of effort and defeat. History does not bear out the view of the powerlessness of good against evil.

We hold all history, particularly the Indian, substantiates this moral thesis. In these articles we have sought to make it plain. . . .

Mahatmaji, of course, contradicted this modern disbelief in the spiritual factor in thought and action in the political field. This has had a great effect which, however, seems ephemeral, because wrong thinking concerning fundamentals still persists. There is a blithe belief that we can heal the moral confusion without faith in God, that is to say, without a positive spiritual conception, or a total spiritual attitude towards life. Unless we see the inseparable relation between ethics and religion, our morality will never descend

from the verbal to the practical plane. All along in the past, India has been fortunate in having the unparalleled leadership of men who emphasized our inside spiritual resources more than other things. That is how very catastrophes had been transformed in the past into spring-boards for a grand creative achievement. If we do not see this we shall convert our present opportunities into great disasters.

It is, of course, not easy to perceive the moral factor that lies embedded in the processes of history. It requires perception of a subtle kind depending on depth and extensity of experience (*bhuyodarshana*) to see this. We cannot understand the world unless we understand our own self and see things for a long time. India can claim both these dimensions of experience ; it is the only civilization living today outside the currents of materialism, and it is the oldest. Her approach to human problems cannot on this account alone be lightly dismissed.

History is essentially a way of interpreting man's doings on earth. It is not a bare and dry catalogue of facts that can be manipulated by the apparatus of the technical historian. This apparatus can never reach to the deeper tides of human action. We always try to superimpose some kind of interpretation or other on these facts. And this interpretation can come only from the intimate experiences of our soul. We are always approaching history with presuppositions drawn from our own self.

In the final analysis there are only two ways of interpreting history, the one secular, the other spiritual. It is deluding ourselves and others to think that we can sit on the fence and avoid taking any decision in regard to the deeper issues of life. Religion and religious phenomena confront us at every inch of the historical ground, and our judgments and evaluations of these rest upon our basic presuppositions. There is no neutral attitude. The belief that there can be one

rests upon a superficial analysis of our self. The interpretation that we superimpose upon history depends ultimately upon the posture we adopt towards life. We understand the world in the measure we understand our self. All this means that history requires ultra-historical principles for its explanation, and these principles are to be discovered within our own selves. It is a mistake to think that history is self-explanatory in the same way as the physical sciences are. In the one case we deal with human appetites, consciousness, freedom, and intelligence; in the other we merely take account of matter and motion, that is to say, facts which can be weighed and measured. If no mental and spiritual factor were involved, history could easily have been a branch of mechanics. Even in the matter of physical sciences we have to make certain *a priori* assumptions which are not subject to rational proof, but without which no rational argument can start. But that does not concern us now beyond this point.

Even the Marxists who deny all extra-material element and regard history as a dialectical movement of matter reserve all their opprobrious epithets for the wicked bourgeoisie. In so far as they do so they refute their own dogma and rely for historical explanation on the factor of human wilfulness.

Men have begun to say today that the basic problem of modern civilization is moral. We prefer to call it religious, which it really is at its roots. This has always been the problem of civilization, but the development of science and the power of technique have given it an urgency not known before. We have come to see that the causes of world-wide stresses and strains and conflicts lie within us more than in external circumstances. The individual and the world act and react on one another. Unless we have an insight into the happenings that go on in the intimate interior of our personalities we shall never come to a true understanding of the forces that operate on a grand scale in history. The

real fight between good and evil is waged deep down in our selves; what we see outside is merely a social reflection of this.

In modern times men have paid more attention to the study of nature than to the study of self with the result that they lack a knowledge of human personality at a deeper level of analysis. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the wide prevalence of a romantic conception of man. The belief was circulated that man was naturally good and pure, and that evil was the product of certain faulty systems and beliefs. If these were changed and man given the opportunity to express himself freely and openly without let or hindrance from artificial systems and religious dogmas about heaven and hell, man would steadily move towards a kind of social paradise. These romantic conceptions recorded a protest against the prevailing injustice in Western society and the church dogma of Original Sin. But the romantic thinkers never resolved the antinomy involved in their thoughts. The point is this: if men are naturally good, how could a section of them come to tyrannize over others?

The cataclysms of the last two world wars have shattered these beliefs altogether by showing the seamy underside of human nature. It is not disputed now that the seamy underside is always there and only requires certain conditions to bring it to the open. There is an undeniable relation between force and general ethical conduct. If policemen are long absent from street corners, the thoughts of an average individual will turn to antisocial purposes. No greater falsehood has been preached than this that man is naturally good or that mere external arrangements and adjustments will secure peace. Man is born free but is everywhere in chains, said Rousseau. An equivalent proposition would be to say that the tiger is born a vegetarian but lives on flesh.

As a result of the recognition that the problem of evil in society is essentially a

personal spiritual problem, there is noticeable today in Western thought, at high philosophical and theological levels, a very marked tendency to return to something like the old conception of Original Sin. Evil is regarded as an essential ingredient of human nature; the only way to overcome it is constant striving for goodness, backed by faith in God. Our redemption is dependent on Divine grace.

This, in our opinion, is also a wrong conception of man, though there is much that can be said in favour of it, considering the world-wide manifestation of evil today. The analysis is certainly more correct than a naturalistic and materialistic interpretation of man. Man in nature is a mixture of good and evil, and man cannot achieve goodness except through constant effort directed to a religious goal. All this is very true in practice. But this analysis of the human personality does not take us very far, and we cannot stop at a personal conception of man or God, without encountering great logical difficulties, or contradicting the highest spiritual experiences of seers. Besides, the doctrine of sin carried beyond the point of its practical necessity and affirmed as more than an apparent truth, can easily become a dangerous doctrine. It presents to a rational mind too many difficulties to be considered true and helpful.

After all personality is a limitation. The Divine factor in us and in the universe is, of course, all that personality means, but it is also much more. If we believe that the Divine is infinite, then surely It must be something beyond and above all our conceptions of It. This is not to say that personality has no value. We cannot reach to the Divine Truth by taking up an altogether negative attitude towards life and its impulses. The whole point is whether or not we should take life as a means. We usually take life in the wrong way and try to persist in our egoism, that is to say, in our limitedness. We take the world as something to be enjoyed instead of as an arena for spiritual striving.

This wrong movement, this effort to persist in our limitedness and separateness from others, arises, according to Vedanta, from an initial fact of ignorance. This is the root of all evil, this ignorance of our own real nature. Once we have this conception, theoretical in the beginning but accepted as a goal, personality can be properly utilized as a stepping-stone to Divine Perfection, here and now. We are all seeking the same goal; while some seek it in the right way, some do it in a wrong manner. All evil arises from the wrong movement to persist in an imagined limitedness. But if we have the right goal before us, our fulfilment need not stand in opposition to the fulfilment of others. Religion says that we truly fulfil ourselves when we help the fulfilment of others. All love, charity, peace, and harmony rest upon this principle of unity; all hatred, violence, disorder and imbalance spring from making matter or separation or ignorance the standard and aim of life. We have to seek the One among the Many. All our search for knowledge, love, justice and truth take for granted this principle of unity. Only because we do not see this, due to cloudiness of vision, we are willing to offer vast human sacrifices to abstract nouns.

Man in nature, limited and evil, is a fact to be faced, but is never the basic truth. This entails the conclusion that though we have to fight, situated as we are, with evil, our perfection does not lie somewhere at a distant point of time in the future. Because we have missed the real purpose of history, which is essentially the education of human personalities, we seem to think that the historical aim lies somewhere ahead of us. The past and the present are, in this view, the stepping stones to a future perfection of humanity. This is how false philosophies like Marxism arise. We do not move nearer to eternity when we move forward in time. All points of time are equidistant from eternity.

This, then, is the true purpose of history, namely, the spiritual perfection of individuals.

A past generation of man may be nearer to God than the present, for it is not the clever intellectual who is closer to God but the man of simple heart. Our intellectual systems resting upon initially false assumptions come between us and God, as thick dark screens. The screen is thinner for the man of faith.

There is, however, a sense in which history may be said to be continuously moving forward to a greater fulfilment on the stage of time-space. This is the gradual victory of love and justice, of truth and equality on the social plane. To this point we have already referred in detail in a previous article of this series. We can look on the world-process as leading to the unification of mankind, embodied in certain political and social institutions, but resting upon the spiritual truth of man. The moral judgments of history are long-term affairs, which is one reason why they are not easy to see. History presents us with moral paradoxes at every turn ; we see that the innocent suffer while the wicked prosper. The paradoxes become resolved when seen in a sufficient perspective which only the passage of time can give to events. Of course, the moral dilemmas in biography and history cannot be puzzled out to complete satisfaction until we turn to the kind of speculation that is called eschatological. It requires researches into a realm too deep and subtle for ordinary scientific methods. But as we have already said even common human history bears out the moral thesis, and purely historical investigations lead us to assume ultra-historical principles operating in the time processes.

The moral dilemmas arise from a short-sightedness of vision and also from oversimplification of the issues involved in a conflict. In actual practice, when suffering is involved, those who suffer are not hundred per cent innocent, nor those who inflict it are hundred per cent wrong. On this earthly plane there is never a conflict which is a clear cut

and straight issue between an absolute good and an absolute evil. Things are very much mixed up in this world of ours, and usually we see only a very superficial aspect of a deep and complex process. And, further, in the long view, it seems that our sufferings are not without meaning, but are an inevitable condition of our growth. Therefore, we must be patient and enquiring when, faced with suffering, we are apt to lament that our goodness has not helped us, or that Providence has let us down.

The stream of time is littered with the wreckages of civilizations and systems which went against the moral grain of the universe. Something always happens to bring about the downfall of injustice and tyranny. Systems prosper so long as they serve the purpose of human destiny, and their overthrow is brought about by immorality and injustice. The moral judgment falls the heaviest on the peoples who put themselves in the place of God. Assyria, Greece, and Rome fell not for want of cleverness and strength but because of worship of nature to the exclusion of the spiritual element in man. Fanaticism spelled the ruin of Spain and Islam in modern times. Napoleon in his early days was an instrument of Destiny. His success was essentially due to his co-operation with the new forces disengaged by the French Revolution. But the moment he flew against the very forces which carried him to victory he was cast down. The fall was not only individual but national also, since France relinquished her early idealism and followed a policy of selfish aggrandizement. The Napoleonic wars which fell heavily on many countries in Europe came as a Providential judgment on anachronistic systems which prevailed in them. Viewed in the perspective, the wars were necessary, since they formed the starting-point of all modern national developments.

Take also the case of Germany. Prussian militarism was not unjustifiable in the beginning. It arose in answer to certain needs of

the situation. It played a great part in European history by holding back Mongol and Muslim invasions from Western Europe and by achieving the unification of Germany. Bismark had an intuition of the real intention of history. He could, as it were, see the real forces in play and make proper use of them. He could, therefore, despite his *Realpolitik*, cry a halt to a career of victory in time. Unfortunately, his methods laid a bad precedent and Prussian militarism, grown lusty and powerful, thought it was omnipotent and could shape human destiny at will. It pursued a demoniacal aim under Kaiser Wilhelm II and Hitler. It has not taken much time for the moral factor to execute judgment. And what a judgment! Consider Japan also, how she lost a splendid opportunity to become the leader of Asia by making a just use of her strength.

All this shows that untruth and fanaticism contain within themselves some inner contradiction which the withering process of time is bound to lay bare. The lesson of history is that evil is self-destructive, and evil arises from the worship of false gods: nature and natural man. It is often thought—the thought is dangerous—that Hitler lost the war purely due to a stroke of ill-luck. What appears as ill-luck is really something that is bound to happen when a wrong line is taken. Consider the two following facts from two different and very intricate situations. Spanish religious fanaticism drove away all the Jews from Spain and her Empire in the Middle Ages. The result was that trade and business, built up by the Jews and on which Spanish power rested, went to pieces. This step contributed principally to the downfall of Spain, which in the beginning of the modern era stood at the head of the Western nations. Similarly, if Hitler had not driven away the scientists from Germany on false racial grounds, he might have been in possession of the atom bomb earlier than the Anglo-Saxons. Falsehood operates in unforeseeable ways to bring

about the annihilation of its votaries.

It requires the withering test of time to reveal the faults that lie concealed in a system. To understand the business of life we are required to make a supreme judgment about life. India has made the supreme judgment in a way as no other country or people has ever done. She has made *dharma* the basis and aim of society, and thereby made a direct hit on the problem of life. She has set the direction of her national life by the distant star of God and has sought to achieve a balance of affections and impulses on this basis. She has never lost sight of the moral conception of history, to which the most emphatic utterance has been given by Sri Krishna in the following words of the *Gita*: *Na hi kalyānakrit kaschit durgatim tata gachchhati*.—Never a doer of good, my son, comes to grief.

India has made mistakes and suffered for them. No nation has lived without making many. But India has never made a mistake about the essential facts of life.

The reliance on the Divine can be and has sometimes been taken in a wrong way. A spiritual vision does not demand of us to remain passive spectators of the human drama. It does not tie us to particular political ideologies or economic systems. On the contrary it requires us to help to create a society that will reflect the spiritual ideal of unity. We are required, in the words of the *Gita*, to be instruments of a Divine purpose.

Today war and independence have together disengaged new and mighty forces in our society, which are causing terrific stresses and strains. There is hardly any due appreciation of them. Poverty and injustice are crying for solution, while the soul of India is crying for expression. Unless we are able to relate the aim of a just economic and social structure with the basic Indian conception, there will be a terrible catastrophe. Alas, we seem to be helplessly moving forward to a cataclysm of this kind. There is not a moment to lose.

The crying need is a programme of action combining social justice with spirituality. Only Vedanta can meet the challenge of our time. Rootless humanism is fighting a losing

battle against the destructive forces. Let us see this and take steps for an all-round reconstruction of Indian society.

(*To be continued*)

## THE MARCH OF HISTORY (II)

By P. S. NAIDU

(*Continued from the August issue*)

### VII. LLOYD MORGAN AND EMERGENCE

Up to this point we have been discussing philosophical views based on biology which have been actually employed in interpreting the past course of world history and in predicting its future. We have now to consider two groups of views which lend themselves readily for use as tools for handling the facts of cultural history, but which still await such usage. The first of these is the Emergent Group with Lloyd Morgan as the chief exponent. At first sight it seems as though the biological theory of Emergent Evolution is eminently suited to interpret the contingent, the novel, and the elusive in history. But there is a deep-seated fallacy in the Morganian conception of emergence which makes it unsuitable for our purpose. 'What after all is emergence?' asks the penetrating thinker Professor Leighton, 'What is it except a name for the mere succession of novel forms and configurations. I do not see any persuasive way, except verbal conjuring trick, of getting a world of teeming individuality and diversity of structure out of a featureless simplicity, without first concealing in the simplicity, the complexity that is to emerge out of it.' Dean Mathews of King's College once likened the theory of emergence, when he was in a lighter mood, to a conjuror's trick. 'We have all seen a conjuror produce a rabbit out of a hat. We may have felt some pleasure

when the conjuror promised to explain how it was done; but we should have been greatly disappointed if he had informed us that when the passes of his magic wand reached a certain degree of complexity the rabbit emerged. After all we knew that already.'

The concept of emergence is drawn from the realm of the physical sciences, and nothing but confusion is likely to result from the fallacious extension to the realm of life and mind a principle inspired by the properties of lifeless matter. We are familiar with what are called the emergent properties of chemical compounds. These properties are, no doubt, novel, but they belong to the same category as those which are old and out of which they arise. The white colour of chalk emerges as a novelty from calcium, carbon, and oxygen, no one of which is white. But what emerges is only a new colour from other and older colours. Water freezes at 0°C., and quenches thirst; these properties are possessed neither by oxygen nor hydrogen. Yet they are after all physical properties arising out of others akin to them in every respect. Again in the new way of thinking in mathematics, quantities when put together give rise to a whole which is greater than their sum. Two plus two may be made to yield five or seven. But the result is still a number. Two plus two cannot be made to yield a star or a rainbow or a Tyagaraja *kriti*. In the theory of emergence something more surprising than the rainbow or the star or the melody is produced, and

that is Life. Life emerges from the organization of chemical molecules! Apart from the absurdity of the whole conception, emergence is incompetent to explain values in the historic process. There is confusion of a most serious type lurking in the Morganian concept. It must be remembered that values in the historic process emerge not from any type of physical organization in an individual, but from the organization of individuals in complex social groups. The concept of Emergent Evolution is competent, if we grant its competence for anything at all, to deal with life as emerging from the organization of matter in a living cell, and with mind as emerging from the organization of living cells in an animal organism. Values, on the other hand, depend on the organization of human beings in social groups. These two concepts belong to two different orders of explanation, and what is suitable for one is out of place in the other. In brief, all the charges that we have urged against Spencer, and many more besides, may be brought against Lloyd Morgan too, and so we have to set aside the concept of emergence as of no value to our purpose.

### VIII. BERGSON AND CREATIVE EVOLUTION

The only biological concept of value to the philosopher engaged in interpreting history is that of Creative Evolution. Temporal processes occupy the centre of the stage in history, and any philosophy of history which has not got its roots deeply set in a correct appreciation of time and its meaning is unsuited to the interpretation of human cultural advancement. One of the reasons why Hegel completely failed in this field is the absolute incapacity of his absolutistic metaphysics to appreciate the significance of time. The real in his system had of course to be confined to the rational, and this to the logical which had finally to be reduced to the abstract mechanism of the triadic dialectic. And then followed all those absurdities with which we are familiar. The only philosopher, then, who has any

understanding of time and the temporal process in history is Bergson. His Creative Evolution is eminently suited to the correct interpretation of history. I have already hinted at the central part played by human will in shaping the course of history, and Bergson alone has the clearest insight into the psychology of the human will. On a foundation of Creative Evolution, well and truly laid, a noble and inspiring edifice of Philosophy of History may be erected. Such a monument awaits erection. But as is necessary in all attempts of this kind, the bare metaphysical framework has to be filled in with rich psychological content. The deplorable consequence of transporting bodily, without first clothing it with flesh and blood and breathing life into it, the gaunt metaphysical skeleton to the realm of history is seen in the insane ravings of Hegel against Asiatics and their cultural achievements. We shall not fall into the trap which caught Hegel, but shall make psychology the bedrock on which to found our formula for interpreting the course of history.

### IX. COMTE AND POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

All the existing biological formulæ having proved unsatisfactory for interpreting history, let us turn to the last or the psychological group for help. In the absence of any avowedly psychological interpretation of history, I propose to refer to Comte's contribution as the nearest approach to the psychological view-point. Comte's evolutionary method of treating history is anti-metaphysical. His conception of the three stages of development—the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive—, and the application of that conception to history have been shown to be faulty in the extreme. But there is a suggestion in his theory of social dynamics which merits our consideration. 'The development of the individual' he says, 'exhibits to us in miniature, both as to time and degree, the chief phases of social development.' It



is this significant statement lying at the foundation of Comte's view of cultural progress that prompted me to include his Positive Philosophy in the last and the most important head of my classification. But Comte too fails in his attempts to build up a theory of social progress. As the Dean of St. Paul remarks, the connection of Comte's philosophy with his doctrine of social evolution is very slender. Once again the secret of failure is to be found in the mishandling of elements that go to make up human individuality and personality. Comte's deification of the positive sciences leads him quite naturally to overlook the conative elements in human personality. By a curious turn of fortune the great Positivist at the very close of his Positive Philosophy hits upon the true function of aesthetics in advancing the pace of social progress. That is an indication of what Comte's positivism might have been, but unfortunately is not, had the gifted French thinker followed the path indicated by the true light. He did not, however, follow that path; so he failed, as his predecessors had failed, to grasp the true significance of the historic process.

#### X. THE FAILURE OF PHILOSOPHIES OF HISTORY AND A WAY OUT

Our brief survey of the philosophies of progress has given us some indication as to why they have proved so thoroughly unsatisfying, and why pessimism has an irresistible attraction for quite a few serious-minded thinkers. The remarks of Dean Inge come pat to the occasion. He says that 'Optimists have not made it clear to themselves or others what they mean by Progress, and that the vagueness of the idea is one of its attractions.' I agree so far as the objection of vagueness is concerned, but instead of admitting that this vagueness is a source of attraction, I should say that it is the cause of detraction. And the only means of dispelling the vagueness is to start rebuilding the concept of progress on sure psychological foundations.

The philosophies of history surveyed so far suffer from two most serious defects, namely, environmentalism and mechanistic determinism. Outward circumstances, geographical conditions, climatic changes, and social conventions merely provoke those human reactions which constitute the fabric of history; they do not produce them. 'The driving power of all change is,' as Sir Radhakrishnan points out, 'in the mind of man, his purposive striving to make the world adopt itself to him.' It is human psychology that gives meaning to history making it irregular and inconsistent, as well as attractive and interesting. And this psychology has not so far been made the basis of any theory of progress. A third and a very serious defect from which all philosophies of history suffer is the absence of any gradation of creative purposes and values. The significance of history is to be judged by its relation to absolute values, to the purpose which is independent of the historic process. In other words, history has to be judged and estimated in terms of a supreme Divine purpose running through all temporal events and conferring meaning and value on them.

History, be it noted, is a record of man and his doings; his hopes, aims, and purposes; his achievements and failures; his successes and frustrations; his hates, feuds, and jealousies; his lusts and passions, and above all of his gropings in the dark, now and then illumined by light, of his conscious and the unconscious, of the unconscious more often than of the conscious, after the Divine essence hidden in outer nature and in his inner self. This is no doubt a trite saying plain enough to the common man, but rather puzzling to the philosopher who believes that *reason* alone rules man and his doings. A Philosophy of History must have its roots in the deep-seated sentiments and the passionate strivings of the human race. And the clue for unravelling this mighty tangle of the history of our race is to be found in the working of the psychological forces in the individuals composing the

race. Man's individuality and personality are the bedrocks on which we shall have to found our philosophy of history. The psychological study of the forces operating within the individual will have to yield the clue for a correct interpretation of the content of history. It is to me a source of wonder and keen disappointment that, in spite of the well-established principles of ontogeny and phylogeny, philosophers should have failed to see the almost complete and perfect parallelism obtaining between the psychological development of individual personality and the progress of the human race as a whole. The steps and gradations in the progress of our race are reproduced in each one of us. By tracing these stages we may not only see the one increasing purpose running through the ages but also get some insight into the final goal of the evolution of man.

#### XI. OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULA FOR INTERPRETING THE HISTORIC PROCESS

Let us now turn to psychology for aid in unravelling the tangled skein of human progress. Some faint glimmerings of psychological light did flit across the intellectual horizon of Hegel, but in the absence of the proper type of depth psychology or conative psychology he failed to develop his insight. 'The first glance of history convinces us' he says, 'that the actions of men proceed from their needs, their passions, their characters and talents; and impress us with the belief that such needs, passions, and interests are the sole springs of action—the efficient agents in the scene of action.' This is a strikingly true statement, but it just stays there without any further development. Our task now is to unfold it with the help of tools forged by contemporary psychology.

I have already hinted at the close parallelism existing between the course of development of the human race as a whole and of the individuals composing the race. We have to look to the process of individual

development, then, to reveal to us the secret of human progress, and the only type of psychology competent to deal with this individual progress is Depth Psychology. Other types of psychology, such as Behaviourism, Gestalt-theories, Functionalism and so forth are utterly useless for our purpose. Depth Psychology insists on understanding the structure and function of the human mind before entering into the fields of history, economics, politics, aesthetics, and literary criticism, for these are, when all is said and done, only branches of applied psychology. Before you attack problems of applied psychology, of which the history of the cultural progress of man is a branch, you must equip yourself with a knowledge of the fundamentals of general psychology.

It has been established after critical scientific investigation that the structure of the human mind is instinctual in essence. We may perhaps express the conclusion of contemporary Depth Psychology in popular language thus: 'The human mind at the start is just a bundle of instincts, nothing more and nothing less.' All the motives which impel man to behaviour of various kinds and grades—from simple food-seeking to the highest type of self-sacrifice—may be resolved ultimately into the fundamental elements of mental structure known as instinctual propensities. It is to be borne in mind that this conclusion has been reached after a careful comparative study of men and higher animals on the one hand, and of primitive and civilized races on the other. So, we hold that the human mind to start with at birth is composed just of instinctual impulses and emotions.

When we declare that man is a creature of instincts, we are confronted immediately with a huge volume of protests and objections. Is not man the proud possessor of reason? the critics ask. Is he not moved by noble and divine sentiments? Is he not a seeker after truth, beauty, and goodness? How could you, then, reduce all man's ideals, ambitions,

hopes, and aspirations to primitive instinctual elements? Now, as a first answer to this challenge, I would draw the attention of the critics to the ghastly happenings at the battle fronts. These blood-curdling scenes of savagery demonstrate beyond any shadow of doubt that man is still a creature of primitive emotions and impulses. The veneer of civilization lies very thin indeed over primitive lusts, passions, and hates, and it takes very little to break this crust and reveal the ugly instincts boiling and seething underneath. Man is not a rational animal; but an instinctual animal. As a second answer to my critics let me raise a counter question: Does any one protest against the view that this earth and the lovely objects on its surface are all composed of chemical elements? Yet, do we find these elements, except in a few rare instances, lying loose and in their pure form on the surface of the earth? The earth's crust, the trees and all the beautiful objects on its surface are composed of chemical elements organized into compounds, and of compounds—organic and inorganic—organized into objects. In the same way, the immediate antecedents of civilized man's behaviour is, no doubt, in many instances, a highly organized or cultured sentiment-pattern acquired by him in the course of his experience, but this pattern may be finally resolved into its constituent elements, namely, the primitive instincts and emotions.

Man, therefore, begins his life with a battery of innate, inherited, instinctual impulses. How many of these fundamental elements are there? Here there is wide disparity in the views held by psychologists. We, in our country, have upheld an eightfold scheme, while the sober-minded among the Western psychologists are inclined to double that number. This divergence in the views of experts need not cause us any surprise, for contemporary science in all its departments is full of such conflicts. The more important among these instinctual elements of the human mind are fear, anger, food-seeking,

curiosity, disgust, sex, self-assertion and submission, acquisitiveness, amusement and appeal.

The human mind is dynamic and is constantly developing through its contact with the environment. And in this process of development the elementary units of mental structure enumerated above get organized into sentiments. Through the formation of sentiments man lifts himself above the level of instincts and impulses which rule and control rigidly the life of the lower animals. Let us consider a simple and familiar example of the way in which the process of mental organization known as sentiment-formation takes place. A freshman from an up-country school enters the university and registers for a course in Biology. He attends the first lecture delivered by the professor of Biology and is charmed by the way in which the great scholar presents the intimate connection between biology and life. The young man is struck with *wonder* at the vast learning of the teacher and is moved to extreme *self-submission*. The two primitive impulses of wonder and submission are now combined in the mind of our young scholar and organized round the professor as a vital centre into the sentiment of *admiration*. If the professor is a strict disciplinarian and our young friend rather lacking in self-control and sense of responsibility, then *fear* of disapproval or of punishment will combine with admiration to produce the sentiment of *awe* with the professor as the centre of organization. And this new sentiment may develop into gratitude and reverence through the further addition of the tender emotion. In this manner the primitive elementary instinctual mental elements get organized round men and objects in the environment into concrete sentiments. Up to the period of adolescence these concrete sentiments—that is sentiments organized round concrete objects and human beings—hold sway over the mind of the individual. Then abstract sentiments—that is sentiments organized round ideas—come into existence

creating ideals, hopes, and aspirations in the mind of the young, and making life richer and more meaningful. So, we find man lifting himself up from the level of primitive instincts to the higher stage of concrete sentiments, and then to the next higher stage of abstract sentiments. These sentiments, concrete and abstract, can never lie quietly side by side, but get often into conflict, each pulling the individual in a different direction. This conflict however is soon resolved, and there evolves as a consequence a scale of sentiment values arranged in a hierarchical order with a master sentiment at the top of the scale. Man alone is capable of experiencing the conflict of sentiments. In his case there arises the need for an abiding scale of sentiment values. In the mind of a person of a well-developed,

well-balanced character there does exist such a permanent scale of values. He or she has organized all the sentiments in such a manner that there is always one dominant sentiment ruling over all the others.

From rudimentary instinctual impulses and emotions to concrete sentiments, and from concrete sentiments to abstract sentiments, and from these, through the instrumentality of conflict and the resolution of the conflict, to an abiding scale of values with a sovereign sentiment at the top—that is how man progresses. This is the basic plan of man's character and of his culture. And this is the psychological formula which I shall use in my next lecture for the purpose of interpreting human history.

(To be continued)

## INDIAN HYMNS

BY BATUK NATH BHATTACHARYA

### SACRED PRECEDES SECULAR

In the literature of almost every country it is remarkable that the sacred or religious preceded the secular. In early history religion is the expression of the awakening soul of a race. It is the outcome of the curiosity and the sense of wonder which are the first reactions of man's thinking soul face to face with the panorama of the world. In India this phenomenon has been more marked than elsewhere. And not in early literature only but in later times also, so long as Hinduism shaped and coloured the polity, the stamp of religion was set upon the entire circle of knowledge. But this larger question apart, our devotional literature, from its first beginnings in the *Vedas* to the latest stages of its development in the *Puranas*, *Tantras*, and popular lyrics, bears in it evidence of the lines of growth and the phases of change of the genius of our people, its thinking mind, and

its evolving ethos. By this evidence we can trace the process of transformation and see how indefinite ideas became definite, the abstract became concrete, and what was inchoate became sharply defined.

### THE SENSE OF WONDER

In Vedic *suktas* the first stirrings of a sense of wonder and of the spirit of enquiry are evident in the questions asked as also in the answers that were evoked :

*Ko addhā veda ka iha pravochat*

*kuta ajāta kuta iyaṃ viśrishtih ;*

*Arvāk devā asya viśarjanena atha ko veda  
yata āvabhava.*

Who knows truly and who will here tell whence this creation? The gods also are later than creation. How can one know whence it sprang up?

This primordial state is vividly described in the *Nasadiya Sukta*.

*Nāsadāsin no sadāsittadānim nāsiddajo no  
vyoma paro yat ;*

*Kimāvarivah kuha kasya sharman ambhah  
kimāsīd gahanam gabhiram.*

Neither existence nor non-existence was then. Then there was neither the atmosphere nor the region beyond the skies. Who covered (whom) and where? For whose delight? Was there water deep and fathomless?

*Na mrityurāsidadamritam na tarhi na vātryā  
ahnah āsit praketaḥ*

*Anidavātam svādhayā tadekam tasmād ha  
anyat na parah kinchanāsa*

Then was there neither death nor immortality. There was no sign either of day or of night. That through Its own power (sole Entity, self-contained), breathed without the (help of) air. Nothing other than (Itself) That existed.

### FAITH IN SUPREME POWER AND PERSON

The mind of man can hardly reach back to this primeval state in which time, space, and matter, form and dimension, life and thought, all made up One category—the Uncreated. How can there be certainty and definiteness in regard to that which preceded Cosmos? It is the eye of the seer that here seeks to probe into mysteries which baffle human comprehension. But amidst the darkness of this chaos, the inspiration of the sage holds fast to the basic truth of the Person and Power whence all creation emanated. This faith does not falter but utters itself in the noblest accents:

*Shrinvantu vishve amritasya putrāḥ ā ye  
dhāmāni divyāni tasthuh.*

Hear, O Ye all, the sons of Immortality as well as those who abide in the celestial regions!

*Vedāhametaṁ puruṣhaṁ mahāntaṁ aditya-  
varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ paraśāt*

*Yameva viditvā atimrityumeti nānyah  
panthā vidyate ayanāya.*

I have known this Supreme Person radiant like the sun and beyond darkness, by knowing whom alone death is transcended; there is no other way to go by.

It is only the reality of vision that could lend this emphasis and confidence to the tone. And along with this promulgation there is the summons to all to accept it:

*Sameta vishve vachasā patim divah eko  
vibhuratithirjanānām*

*Sa Purvyaḥ nutanamāvivasat tam vartani-  
ranuvavrita ekamit puru.*

Come ye all together with words of praise to the Lord of Heaven. He is the sole Lord and supreme over all. The Ancient One, He still dwells in all that is new. All the diverse paths lead to Him alone.

To read these verses is to be lifted to a higher plane and to be transported to an early world in which the basic notes of pious feeling and devotion were first sounded—those notes which in later ages swelled in volume and reverberated in echoes throughout our intensely spiritual country. The solemnity that breathes through them and the depth of conviction which they evince reach the very limit of exalted utterance.

### THE SUKTAS OF PERMANENT VALUE

Vedic literature is one long paean of praise addressed to different deities. Amidst this enormous mass of devotional literature certain *suktas* stand out conspicuous as permanent landmarks in the memory of the race. They still have their hold on the orthodox mind as connected with religious practices which have continued through the ages, and they have deeply influenced both faith and modes of worship as well as devotional formalities. They may be said to have moulded the religious creed and practice of Hindus for all time. The most famous of these are the *Puruṣa Sukta*, the *Rudra Sukta*, the *Devi Sukta*, and the *Soura Sukta*.

### SACRIFICE—THE ORIGIN OF CREATION

The first of these, the *Hymn of Man*, presents creation as the original and supreme sacrifice from which social order and the bases of Ethics and Religion emerged, along with the cosmic system, the heavenly bodies, the elements, the atmosphere, and the different kinds of creatures. In sublimity of conception and magnificence of expression, the *Purusha Sukta* is unique in the world's sacred literature. Very aptly has it been the primal utterance on which the creed and social order of India have been reared :

*Sahasrashīrṣhā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ  
sahasrapāt*

*Sa bhumim sarvato vitvā atyatīkṣhad-  
dashāṅgulam ;*

*Puruṣa evedam sarvaṁ yad bhutam  
yachcha bhavyam*

*Utāmrītatousyeshāno yadannenātīrohati.*

Of a thousand heads and eyes and of a thousand feet, He covered the earth on all sides and transcended it by ten digits. All that is, is the *Purusha*, all that is past and all that is future. He is the Lord of Immortality. He is also the Lord of that which grows through manifestation.

*Etāvānasya mahimā ato jyāyāṁścha  
poorushaḥ*

*Pādosya vishvā bhootāni tripādasyāmrītam  
divi.*

All this shows His greatness but the *Purusha* is still greater. All creations are a fourth of Him ; three fourths of Him are the Immortal portion in Heaven.

### COSMIC OUTLOOK

*Yat puruṣhena havishā devā yajnamatan-  
vata*

*Vasanto asyāseedājyam greeshma idhmah  
sharaddhaviḥ*

When the gods performed the sacrifice with the *Purusha* as the oblation, Spring was the melted butter, Summer the fuel and Autumn the libation.

*Tasmādyajñāt sarvahutah richah sāmāni.  
yajñire*

*Chhandāmsi yajñire tasmād yajustasmā-  
dajāyata*

From that sacrifice where all were offered, originated the *Riks* and the *Sāmans* and the Hymns in verse and the *Yajus*.

*Chandramā manaso jātashchakshoh suryo  
ajāyata*

*Mukhādīndraschagnishcha prānādvā-  
yurajāyata*

The moon was born of His mind, the Sun of His eye, from His mouth Indra and Fire, from His breath Air.

*Nābhya āseedantariksham sheersho dyaush  
samavartata*

*Padbhyām bhoomirdishah shrotrāt tathā  
lokānakalpayan*

From His navel the atmosphere came to be, from His head Heaven emerged, from His feet the earth, from His ear the quarters. Thus were the regions formed.

*Vishvataṣchakshuruta vishvatomukho  
vishvatobahuruta vishvataḥ pat*

*Sambāhubhyām dhamati sam patatraih  
dyāvā bhoomi janayan deva ekah*

Everywhere are His eyes, everywhere His mouths, His arms and His feet are on all sides. The sole Lord, He created Earth and Heaven and with His arms held them apart as if on two wings.

The *Purusha Sukta* presents the Creator as the Transcendent and yet as the One from whose limbs all created objects, all kinds of animate beings, all classes in society issued.

### RUDRA'S MULTIFORM HUMAN IMAGES

In the *Rudra Adhyaya* there is a passage which reads like a remarkable worship of Humanity. All classes in society, even those that are vile and fearful, the *lilāvighrahas* or forms assumed in sport by Rudra are mentioned in specific detail and are saluted and adored :

*Namo virupebhyo vishvarupebhyashcha vo.  
namo, namo mahadbhyah kshullake-  
bhyashcha vo namah*

*Namo rathibhyo arathebhyashcha vo namo,  
namo rathebhhyoh rathipatibhyashcha  
vo namah*

*Namah senābhyah senānibhyashcha vo  
namo, namah kshatribhgyah sangri-  
hitribhyashcha vo namah*

*Namastakshabhyo ruthakārebhgyashcha vo  
namo namah kulālebhgyah karmāre-  
bhgyashcha vo namah*

*Namah punjishtebhgyoh nishādebhyashcha  
vo namo namah ishukridbhgyoh dhanva-  
krīdbhyashcha vo namah*

*Namo mrigayubhyah shvanibhyashcha vo  
namo namah shvabhyashcha shvapati-  
bhgyashcha vo namah*

I salute you, the deformed and the multiform, and you of mighty powers as well as you of petty parts. I bow to you, charioteers and those without chariots, the chariots and lords of the chariots; I salute you, soldiers and captains, Kshatriyas and collectors, carpenters and chariot-makers, potters and ironsmiths, fowlers and fishers, arrowsmiths and bowsmiths, hunters and keepers of dogs in leash, the dogs and the masters of the dogs as well.

It is a very long list and as one recites the muster-roll of artisans and wielders of weapons, one has a glimpse of human society in its early stages and visualizes the emergence of those most useful crafts and industries which marked the evolution of society from the savage and barbarian to the civilized state.

### SUPREME GODHEAD IN EVERY DEITY

The point to be stressed in regard to these great hymns is the vastness and comprehensiveness of the conceptions of the Deity. As a result, the One divinity looms so large as to leave no room for any other. Thus the *Rudra Sukta* has the verse:

*Esho ha devah pradisho anusarvāh purvo  
ha jātah sa u garbh antah*

*Sa eva jātah sa janishyamanah praty-  
angjanāstishthati sarvatomukhah*

Such is God. He is present everywhere.

He is the first born. Yet He is still in the womb. He is all that has been born and that will be born. Facing all sides He dwells in everybody.

*Savitā pashchātāt savitā purastāt savitot-  
tarāttāt savitā adharattāt*

*Savitā nah svatu sarvatomim savito no  
rāsataṁ dirghamāyuh*

Savitri is behind, Savitri is before. Savitri is above and Savitri is below. May Savitri send us perfection. May Savitri grant us long life.

This verse occurs in the *Saura Sukta* as well. This latter *sukta* contains, besides the famous verse which asserts the Identity of all the Gods who differ in name only and which has served as the bedrock of the tolerant catholicity of the Hindu view of life.

### MANY NAMES BUT ONE GOD

*Indram mitram varunam agnimāhur-  
atho divyah sa suparno garutmān*

*Ekam saul viprā bahudhā vadanti agnim  
yamam matarishvānamāhuh . . . .*

They call Him by various names—Indra, Mitra, Varuna or Agni. He is also called the One of shining plumage. There is only one Entity—the sages name it variously as Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Yama or Matarishwan.

This concept of a single Deity pervading all creation is noticeable everywhere in the hymns to any of the gods that have been worshipped by our society. The devotee absorbed in the meditation of his special god exalts Him above all, and his mind is wholly filled by the object of his adoration. The Hindu religious attitude cannot therefore be characterized as polytheism. It is more fitly described as multiple monotheism. Hence we meet with resonant echoes of the same kind of paean, though the context varies. The *Hiranyagarbha Sukta* sets the seal, for all time, upon this attitude which isolates the attention and focuses it on the Supreme Power. This is in sharpest contrast to the altars raised to the Unknown God in Greece which Paul,

the Apostle of Christ, found and which led him to remark 'whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.' In the *Hiranyagarbha Sukta* the opposite idea is stressed—not doubt and ignorance but conviction, clear and strong :

*Hiranyagarbhah samavartatāgre bhutasya  
jātah patireka āsit  
Sa dādharma prithivīm dyāmutemam kasmai  
devāya havishā vidhema*

In the beginning Hiranyagarbha alone existed. Coming into being He was the sole Lord of the universe. He upholds the earth and yonder Heaven. To whom else should we offer oblation !

*Ya atmadā baladā yasya rishva upāsate  
prashisham yasya devāh  
Yasya chhāyā amritam yasya mrityuh  
kasmai devāya havishā vidhema*

He gives the soul ; He gives the strength. All the worlds obey His supreme command, so also the gods. His reflection is Immortality ; His shadow is Death. To whom else should we offer oblation !

*Yasya ime himavanto mahitrā yasya samudram  
rasayā sahāhuh  
Yasyemāh pradisho yasya bāhu kasmai  
devāya havishā vidhema*

Whose majesty the Himalayas declare, as well as the sea and also the *rasa* or river. Whose arms are all these directions. To whom else should we offer oblation !

*Atmā devānām bhuvanasya garbho  
yathāvasham charati deva cshah  
Ghoshā idasya shrinvire na rupam tasmai  
vātāya havishā vidhema*

Soul of the gods, the womb of the universe, this God moves about at His own will. One can hear His voice but not see His form. Let us offer oblation to this God who is like unto the Air.

*Pashchāt purastāt adharādutrāt kavih  
kāvylene paripāhi rājan  
Sakhe sakhāyam ājaro jarimne agne  
martyān amartyastvam nah*

Behind and before, below and above, protect us by your grace, benevolent King,

Save a friend, O Friend ! Eternal and Immortal as you are, save us who are decaying and mortal.

This note of unwavering faith swells in volume and pitch as the ages roll on ; it is the ground-note that sounds in the ecstatic outbursts of devotion that throughout history have proceeded from the heart of Aryavarta and the Dravidian South. And in the procession of the centuries the desire to draw closer to the Root-principle of all-being by the two-fold approach—humanizing of the Divinity and the deifying of Man—becomes more and more explicit. It is the distinctive feature of the Hindu cultural heritage—this pervasive God-consciousness. As the *Svetāshvatara Upanishad* has it :

*Yo devo agnau yo apsu yo vishvam  
bhuvanāmāvivsha  
Ya oshadhishu yo ranaspatishu tasmai  
devāya namo namah*

I salute again and again that God who dwells in fire and in the waters, who permeates the whole universe, who resides in herbs and in the lordly trees of the forest.

#### IDEA OF UNITY IN THE DEVI SUKTA

The idea of Oneness is repeated in hymns of diverse kinds. The *Devi Sukta*, which is the root and germ of the *Chandi* or the Great Hymn to the Mother, has the verses :

*Mayā so annamatti yo vipashyati yah  
prāniti ya im shrinotyuktam*

It is by me that one eats food, sees and breathes and hears what is said.

*Ahamera vāta iva pravāmyārabhamānā  
bhuvanāni rishvā*

*Paro divā para enā prithivyaitāvati mahinā  
sambabhava*

Having created all these worlds I move about freely like the wind which blows where it lists. I, who am beyond the sky and beyond this earth, came to be so by my majesty.

#### LATER-DAY HYMNS STRESS MONOTHEISM

Emerson, the sage of Boston, points out the contrast between the spirit of the East



and that of the West in the two words, Unity and Diversity. The highest unity in the realm of thought is monism or Advaitavada, and different schools and sects in India, under varying nomenclatures, have tended to espouse this principle of unity. This is easily proved by citations from the hymns of a later date addressed to any of the five deities whose worship distinguishes the varnashramic society. Thus the *Ganeshāstaka* has the stanzas :

*Yataschāvīrāsīt jagatsarvameva tathābj-  
āsano vishvago vishvagoptā*

*Tathendrādayo devasanghā manushyāh  
sadā tam ganesham namāmo bhajāmah*

Whence appeared this whole world as also the lotus-seated Brahma, Vishnu, the protector of All, so also Indra and the other hosts of gods, and mankind, ever do we salute him, Ganesha, and worship him.

*Yato vahnibhānu bhavo bhurjalancha  
yatah sāgarāshchandramā vyoma  
vāyuh*

*Yatah sthāvara jangamā vrikshasamghā  
sadā tam ganesham namāmo bhajāmah*

Whence sprang Fire and Sun, Bhava (i.e. Shiva), Earth and Water, whence issued the Oceans and Moon, Ether and Air, whence were born the immovable objects and the moving creatures and the clustering trees, ever do we salute him, Ganesha, and worship him. In another hymn He is lauded thus :

*Ajam nirvikalpam nirākāramekam parā-  
nandamānandamadvaitapurnam*

*Param nirgunam nirvishesham nirīham  
parabrahmarupam ganesham bhajema*

We adore Ganesha, the Unborn, Immutable, Formless Deity. Highest Bliss and Joy, filled with the sense of oneness, Transcendent, Attributeless, negating all differentiation, Effortless and the Supreme Brahman.

These citations may be multiplied but it is time to pass on to other aspects of our literature of devotion.

### EVERY CONCEPTION LIMITS DIVINITY

The transition in thought from the con-

crete and personal to the abstract and impersonal, from the embodied to the attributeless, is so common a feature of our hymns that it is palpably a misuse of language to characterize the attitude as idolatrous. All strivings of the limited human mind to conceive the Ineffable are bound to lead to delimitation and circumscribing of the Absolute. The impossibility of rightly comprehending the Ultimate Principle in the Infinite is feelingly brought out in the well-known *shloka* :

*Rupam rupavivarjitasya bhavato dhyānena  
yatkalpitam stutyānirvachanīyatākli-  
laguordurikritā yanmayā*

*Vyāpītram cha nirākritam bhagavato yat-  
tirthayātrārdīnā kshantavyam jagadisha  
tad vikalatādoshatrayam matkritam*

That I have imagined in meditation your form, formless as You are ; that I have limited the idea of your inexpressibility by expressing you in hymns, Master of the Universe as you are ; that I have denied in practice Your all-pervasiveness, Lord of supernal majesty, by pilgrimages and the like, O Lord of All. I pray for pardon of these three faults of mine, born of my infirmity.

The keynote of this trend of thought was heard in the well-known upanishadic verse :

*Apānīpādo javano grahitā pashyatyaucha-  
kshuh sa shrinotyakarnah*

*Sa vetti vedyam na cha tasyasti vettā  
tamāhuragryam purusham mahāntam.*

Without hands and feet he runs fast and seizes ; without eyes he sees ; without ears He hears ; He knows whatever is knowable, but there is no knower of Him. He is called the First and the Supreme Person.

Alongside and akin to this confession of the narrowness and poverty of man's powers, the acute feeling that all rites of worship are quite inadequate for the adoration of the Absolute who needs nought that man has to offer. Hebrew Psalm and Christian hymn—every outpouring of the enlightened human spirit—is at one in this recognition. In the hymn of highest worship, (*Parāpujā Stotra*),

as in the early upanishadic verses, the same ideas find expression. The Upanishad says :

*Na tatra suryo bhāti na chandra tārakam  
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto ayamagnih  
Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam tasya  
bhāsā sarvamīdam vibhāti*

There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, these lightnings flash not there, what to speak of this fire? He shining all shines, by His light all this shines.

The *Parāpujā Stotra* has these verses :

*Purnasyāvāhanam kutra sarvādhārasya  
chāsanam*

*Svachchhasya pādyamarghyamcha shud-  
dhasyāchāmanam kutah*

Wherefrom is the invocation of Him who is ever full, a seat for Him who is the support of all, foot-laver and oblation for the Stainless, mouth-wash for the Pure ?

*Nirmalasya kutah snānam vastram vishro-  
darasya cha*

*Nirāmbasyoparitam pushpam nirvā-  
sanasya cha*

Wherefore the rite of bathing for the All-clean, and cloth cover for Him, inside of whom is the Universe, the sacred thread for Him who has no material substratum, or flowers for Him who has no craving ?

*Nirlepasya kuto gandho ramyasyābhara-  
nam kutah*

*Nityatriptasya naivedyam tāmḍanacha  
kuto vibhoh*

Wherefore the sandal-paste for Him who suffers no smear, or ornament for Him who is the soul of Beauty, food-offering for the Ever-satisfied, or betel offering for Him who is All-pervasive ?

*Pradakshina hyanantasya hyadrayasya  
kuto natih*

*Vedavākyairavedyasya kutah stotram  
vidhiyate*

How can there be circumambulation of the Infinite, and obeisance to Him who has no second ? How can there be adoration of Him who is unknowable even by means of vedic sayings ?

*Svyam prakāshamānasya kuto nirājanam  
vibhoh*

*Antarbalishcha purnasya kathamudvāsa-  
nam bhavet*

How can there be waving of lights before Him who is self-luminous, or change of raiment for Him who is full, both within and without ?

## WORSHIP, AN INSTRUMENT OF ASCENT TO GOD-LEVEL

Hymns are a part of the ritual of worship. Worship is a process of psychic elevation of the limited, finite being to the god-level, with raptures and exaltations which help to free the human mind from the pettiness and narrowness of mundane existence. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection that is already in man, and Religion, the manifestation of the Divinity that is already in man.' This saying crystallizes the maxims and directions that our sacred literature contains regarding devotional exercises. Thus it is said : *devo bhutvā devam yajet*—'Worship a god by being a god.' The idea underlying sacrifice and partaking of the sacrificial remnants is the at-one-ment of the devotee with the object of adoration or a communication of the attributes of the adored to the adorer. Such is the significance also of the Eucharist. Whoever partakes of the consecrated water and wine, which in the eye of faith turn into the Redeemer's flesh and blood, becomes one with him in spirit and shares His saving grace. Likewise our *Shāstras* lay down :

*Aham devotha naivedyam pushpagandhā-  
dikamcha yat*

*Toyādhārastathā toyam devam devīya  
yojayet*

Myself, the food-offering, flowers, perfume and the rest, the water-pot and the water—all these are God himself and in worship it is the God that is dedicated to the God.

### HUMAN ACTIVITIES—FORMS OF DIVINE SERVICE

It is but one step from this attitude to the devotee's outlook in which all human activities are forms of service of the Divinity. Here the limits of resignation, self-dedication and self-surrender are reached. In the *Gita* the advice to Arjuna which sums up all is :

*Yat karoshi yadashnāshi yajjuhosi dadāsi  
yat*

*Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva  
madarpanam*

Whatsoever you do, eat, offer at sacrifice, or give or perform as austerity, O Kaunteya, dedicate all that to me.

In the hymn of mental worship addressed to Shiva occurs a stanza which exactly corresponds to this injunction. Like meditation, this mental worship is a part preceding the external rites. And the psychic process is symbolically detailed in the *shloka* :

*Atmā tvam girijā matih sahacharāh  
prānāh sharīram griham*

*Pujā te nishayopabhogarachanā nidrā  
somaḍhisthitih*

*Sanchārāh padayoh pradakṣinaḥ vidhih  
stotrāni sarvagiro*

*Yad yad karma karomi tattad akhilam  
shambho tavārādhnam*

Thou art my Soul, Thy consort, Himalaya's daughter, is the mind, Thy attendants the vital airs, Thy shrine this body, Thy worship is the enjoyment of sensible objects, mystic meditation of Thyself is sleep, the rite of circumambulation the movement of the feet, Thy hymns are all the words that are spoken, whatsoever acts I perform are, O Shambhu, the adoration of Thyself.

The same sentiment occurs in the *Bhāgavata* :

*Sa vāg yayā tasya guṇān grīṇite karau cha  
tat karmākarau mō 'ścha*

*Smared vasantam sthīrajāṅgamaśu shrinoti  
tat punyakathāh sa karmah*

*Shirashcha tasyobhayalingamānamet tade-  
va yat pashyati taddhi chakshuh*

*Angāni vishnoratha tajjanānām pādoda-  
kam yāni bhajanti nityam*

That is the speech which lauds His excellences, those are hands that perform His work, that is mind which recalls Him who dwells in creations—both motionless and moving—that is the ear which hearkens to His sacred lore, that is the head which bows to His two-fold manifestation, that is the eye which sees Him, those are limbs which accept the foot-lavings of Him and His favoured souls.

Thus the Ego of the devotee seeks to merge itself in the will of the Maker and Sustainer of the Universe and man realizes himself as in tune with the great Laws that weave the garment of life on the loom of Time. 'Thy will be done' is the prayer of piety, no matter what the religious denomination may be.

### ABSOLUTE SELF-RESIGNATION IN BHAKTI

The absolute resignation to the will of God is specially marked in the psalms and prayers inspired by the cult of Bhakti, whether enshrined in Sanskrit or in the provincial languages of India. In this mood the sole desire of the *bhakta* is that he may never lose communion with the deity he worships, whatever betide him in terms of material good or in the cycle of existences he may have to go through. Verses expressing this sentiment abound in the Vaishnava literature of devotion :

*Nāsthā dharme na vasunichaye naiva  
kāmapabhoge*

*Yad bhāvyaṁ tad bhavatu bhagavan pur-  
vakarmāmurupam*

*Etat prārthyam mama bahumatam jñma-  
janmāntarepi*

*Tvat pādāmbhoruhayugagatā nishchalā  
bhaktirastu*

I do not rely on pious exercises, on store of wealth or on the enjoyment of objects of desire. Let what will happen, O Lord, in accordance with the past karma. This is the boon dearest to my heart—that in this as well

as in other births my devotion to Thy lotus-feet may ever remain unshaken.

Sri Gaurāṅga, in his Eight Stanzas of Instruction, utters the same sentiment :

*Na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavi-  
tām vā jagadisha kāmāye  
Mama janmani janmanishvare bhavatūd  
bhaktirahaituki tvayi.*

Nor wealth nor a large following, nor woman's beauty, nor poetry, O Lord of the World, I crave, but only this—that my devotion to thee, O God, which has no ulterior motive, may ever abide, birth after birth.

Two other stanzas carry this sentiment to a further reach—the sense of man's insignificance and his absolute dependence on grace, as also the supreme value of resignation to His will :

*Agi nandanuṇa kinkaram patitam mām  
vishame bhavāmbudhau  
Kripayā tara pādapankajasthitadhulisadri-  
sham vichintaya*

O son of Nanda, view me, in your mercy, your slave, fallen in the fearful ocean of life, as no better than a speck of dust on your lotus-feet.

*Āshlishya vā pādanatam pinashtu mām  
adarshanānmarmahatām karotu vā  
Yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampato mat-  
prāṇanāthastu sa eva nāparah*

Prostrate at His feet, He may, after embracing, trample me down, or by withholding his countenance, cut me to the quick. Let the wanton gallant treat me in any way he likes, still He is the Lord of my life and none other.

### VAISHNAVA VARIETIES OF DIVINE LOVE

The language of this *shloka* strongly suggests a relationship between the Divine adored and the human worshipper as between the human lover and the object of his love—a depth of feeling and intimacy which we associate with earthly love. And this brings us to the latest phase of devotion inspired by the cult of Bhakti. In this phase, the devo-

tee's attitude to his Lord is differentiated by certain distinct feeling-tones which are variations of the sentiment of affection according to the relationship between the parties. They are evoked, not by the acceptance of the Supreme as the attributeless (*nirvisheshā*), unconditioned Brahman, but of the Lord as endowed with concrete personal attributes, which make realization vivid and worship an experience of intense sweetness. These variations are (a) *dāsya priti*—the lowest bliss—arising from the sense of servanthship to Lord Krishna, of power and majesty inconceivable, (b) *sakhya priti*—the affection that subsists between friends—a closer bond, free from diffidence and formality, as between equals, (c) *vātsalyarati*—or parental love—such as Yashoda felt for the Lord of the Universe in her arms, shorn of the ideas of His overwhelming greatness and potency, and lastly (d) *madhura* or *ujjvalā priti*—a sublimation of conjugal love which is turned Heavenward and raised to the highest pitch of intensity.

### FOLK-LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

These different expressions of the sentiment of love and the modifications and variations of devotional attitude which they imply are products of the latest stage in the evolution of Indian spirituality. This stage has yielded a variety and richness of emotional fervour and a rapturous literature, the survey of which would call for separate treatment. The literature of this last phase of devotion is extensive and embodied not in Sanskrit alone but also in the provincial languages of India. The appeal of the hymns and songs in the popular tongues is to larger masses than is possible in the case of Sanskrit verses. Bhakta Kabir says : 'Sanskrit is like the water in a well, the language of the people is the flowing stream.' The *Bhāgavata* is replete with outpourings of Bhakti from all the varied emotional standpoints. The *Prabandhas* which the Sri Vaishnavas of the South regard as the Tamil Veda and which embody the ecstatic utterances of Nammalvar and the other

Alvar saints and Kulashekhara's *Mukunda-mālā* reveal the depth of devotional feeling which image-worship has evoked. In them we visualize the moods of the rapt devotee depicted in the *Bhāgavata* :

*Evam vratah svapriyānamakirtiyā jātā-  
nūrāgo dutachitra uchchaih*

*Hasatyatho roditi routi gāyatyunmāda-  
vanurityati lokabāhyah*

So dedicated and filled with love by the chanting of the name dear to his heart, and melting within, he laughs aloud, weeps and cries out and sings like a madman and dances like one outside society.

### ADORATION OF INCARNATIONS

And the stream swells in volume and the channels get wider and deeper in works like the *Sursāgar* and *Rāmcharitmanas*; in the lyrics of Jayadeva, Vidyapati, and Chandidasa and the *padas* of the post-Chaitanya Vaishnava poets of Bengal, which are sung in *kirtan* or devotional tunes; in the *abhangas* of the Maharashtra devotees, Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Tukaram, and Ramadas; in the *bhajans* of the Upper India saints and reformers—Ramananda and the line of his disciples, Mirabai, Kabir and Tulsidas; in the songs and poems (many of them poured out extempore) of the Shaiva saints, like Manikka Vachakar, Appar, Sundaramurti, and Jnanasambandhar of Southern India—known for their heart-touching appeal—which are collected in treasures like the *Tevaram*. Bhakti is said to have flowered in the Dravida land and, through Ramananda and Kabir, to have spread to seven countries. This vast literature records the outpourings of the heart of India—the raptures and exaltations, poignancies and effusions of joy felt by mystics and saints of the Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta sects in all parts of our subcontinent. All this is an outcome of the process of humanizing and personification of the Divinity which has marked latter-day religious thought. It has flourished round the two personalities,—

at once Divine and Human—viz. Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, that have enthused devotional hearts in the country—more than the deities of former epochs—stirred the deepest feelings, influenced conduct and discipline, stimulated idealism and strengthened humane impulses. The basic idea of an Incarnation which started this process has found classic utterance in two lines of the *Chaitanya Chari-tamrila* :

*Krishner yateka līlā sarvottama naralīlā  
Naravapu sarvarupasāra*

Of all the manifestations of the play of the Divine the best is in the form human, and the human body is the best of all the forms of beauty assumed by Him.

It is, in another way, the 'diapason closing full in Man'. The touching situations and the flow of sentiment which these two Incarnations conjured up, as also the cult of Shakti or the Great Mother, make up a chapter of very great interest in our literature, and illustrations of these, no matter how sparingly picked out, would require more space than this discourse can afford.

### CONSOLATION TO THE BELIEVERS

These Incarnational hymns have been the source of a special kind of consolation to believing hearts in times of individual and national vicissitudes. It is the solace of the ultimate triumph of Righteousness which is held out in the *Gītā* in the oft-repeated lines :

*Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati  
bhārata*

*Abhyutthānamadharmaṣya tadātmanam  
srijāmyaḥam*

Whenever Righteousness suffers, O Bharata, and Unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then do I project myself (in Incarnations).

And the same assurance is given by the Shakti (Goddess of Power) in the *Chandi* :

*Ittham yadā yadā bādhā dānavotthā  
bhavishyati*

*Tadā tadāvatiriyāḥam karishyāmyarisam-  
kshayam*

Thus, at all times, when opposition due to demons will arise, I will descend and destroy the enemy.

In the new set-up of our political existence today a deeper and newer significance attaches to these utterances.

### PARALLEL MOVEMENTS OF PURE THEISM AND ETHICISM

It is curious, however, that alongside, but opposite in direction, another current of thought ran during this period—a tendency to pure theism and rejection of all ideas bearing on worship of the Deity in sensible concrete forms and images. It is a form of Protestantism within the Hindu fold, coupled with a discarding of the accepted social polity—its hierarchy of castes, its ceremonies, its privileges and exclusions. However unorthodox and dissentient all this may appear to social no-changers, it would be presumptuous to label it as alien to the genius of India. These ideas may well be shown to follow from the fundamentals which the *Upanishads*, in their wonderful breadth of vision and clarity of insight, reveal. The stress, in this phase of religious evolution, is on purity of heart, on the simple life, on faith in the one God who transcends all thought, on the need of human fellowship and harmony.

### INDIAN TOLERANCE AND CATHOLICITY

But it is time to conclude this somewhat desultory treatment of a subject of absorbing interest and enormous extent. And this is best done by touching upon the notes of tolerance, catholicity, and cordial accommodation of other viewpoints that may well be claimed to be India's contribution to the world-concert of faiths and feelings, religious creeds and cults. The *Gītā* contains the Divine utterance on this point:

*Yepyanyadevatābhaktāḥ yajante shraddhāyānvitāḥ*  
*Tepi māmeva kaunteya yajantyavidhipurvakam*

Even those attached to other deities who in sincere faith worship—they also adore me, O Kaunteya, though not in accordance with the scriptural directions.

The oneness of God, while, the names differ is set forth in the familiar stanza:

*Yam śaivāḥ samupāsate śhiva iti brahmeti vedāntino*  
*Bauddhā buddha iti pramānapataḥ karteti naiyyayikāḥ*  
*Arhannityatha jainashāsanaratāḥ karmeti mimāṃsakāḥ*  
*Soyam vo vidadhātu vāṇchhitaphalam trailokyānātho hariḥ*

He whom the Shaivas adore as Shiva, the Vedantins as Brahman, the Bauddhas as the Buddha the Naiyyayikas, skilled in proof, as the Creator, the Jainas as Arhat, the Mimamsakas as the inexorable Law of Karma or Action may He, Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, grant you the boon you desire.

The *Shivamahimnastotra*, the Hymn to the Majesty of Shiva, nobly declares:

*Trayi sāmukhyam yogah pashupatimatam*  
*vaishnavamiti*  
*Prabhinne prasthāne paramidamadah pathyamiti cha*  
*Ruchinām vaichitryād rijukutilanānāpathajushām*  
*Nrināmeko gamyatvamasi payasāmarnava iva*

The three Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga, the Pashupata cult and the Vaishnava—these different ways appeal to different men as sound and wholesome; so they pursue paths straight and meandering, according to the variety of tastes—but Thou alone art the goal and destination of all men, even as the Ocean is the receptacle of all streams.

This note of harmony among diverse faiths should fitly close a survey of the devotional literature of India, for it is the distinctive contribution of the country to the world-concert of credal religions. And it is sincerely to be hoped that this note will grow fuller and firmer now that India has attained indepen-

dence after centuries of subjection to alien rule. With independence, a new feeling of self-esteem will grow in the people as well as a conviction that every human expression in action or in literature is of value and significance; that every record of what the nation felt or did, strove for or achieved in the past, matters. This should lead among other things, to the compilation of anthologies of religious lyrics and songs, psalms and hymns, larger and more various than any made in the past. Dadu's collection of sixteen hundred

and of the Granth Sahib of sixteen hundred and four furnish precedents and examples of such inspiring spiritual records compiled more than three centuries ago. Since then, the volume of literature in this line has increased and the mind of the race has developed and moved forward in the path of religious experience and it is time to recall what has been so well said by Rajjabji: 'If I can unite all the streams of thought in the world, such a confluence would indeed be the holiest of places.'

## THE VEDANTIC WORLD-VIEW OF SHANKARA

BY DR R. P. SINGH

Shankara is the central thinker in the history of Indian philosophy. In him all lines of thought converge: idealism and realism, pragmatism and rationalism, naturalism and mysticism, agnosticism and faith-philosophy. For this very reason his philosophy is difficult to characterize. This fact also explains to a great extent the divergent interpretations that have been put upon his teachings. But Shankara binds together the different strands of thought present in his writings with the help of the unique point of view from which he looks at the problems of philosophy, namely, the standpoint of value.

The root of the whole difficulty about the interpretation of Shankara's teaching is that his true position in the history of Hindu thought has been missed. His philosophy is an embodiment of the cultural spirit of Hinduism, and he appears before us as an exponent and guardian of this cultural spirit. The system of thought which he has bequeathed to us is an attempt to supply the philosophical foundation on which the superstructure of Hindu culture rests. The interpreters of Shankara do not realize this

sufficiently, and his critics do not seem to be aware of it.

*Shruti* is a repository of the truths realized by the *rishis*—truths which constitute the very life-blood of the Hindu race. The history of Hinduism from the very early times when Manu and Vyasa, Buddha and Shankara, appear on the Indian soil, down to our own age has been the history of the reaffirmations and fresh declarations of those eternal truths and of attempts to embody them in the social, religious and political institutions of the race. Shankara associates himself with the long line of vedic seers and emphasizes the traditional way of looking at things. But in insisting upon tradition he does not forget that no generation can merely reproduce its ancestors. Tradition for him is life and movement and perpetual re-interpretation.

The preservation of this cultural spirit which is permanent and abiding, and the defence of it are the tasks which Shankara's philosophy imposes upon itself. The preservation of this spirit which is the spirit of the *Vedas* means the preservation of *brahmanatva*. Shankara's philosophy is an exposition and

also a defence of that supreme Reality and supreme Value from which *brahmanatva* gets its meaning and its justification. The vedic religion has always stood for the truth that there is an Eternal Good, an Absolute Value, a Supreme Perfection, an Infinite Life, a Universal Existence. What 'exists' here and now draws its substance and its value from this reality which the *Vedas* call Brahman. Brahman is the most perfect Reality and the most supreme Value. In it value and what appears to us mortals as bare 'existence' meet and fuse in one. But the duality of, which also means the discrepancy between, Value and Existence is an inalienable feature of finite life. There is a gulf between the Ideal and the Actual. Hence all willing and striving on the part of man who is aware of the Ideal and also of the distance which divides the Actual from the Ideal. Hence also the striving to know. Hence all the problems man has to face in his life. Hence also the problem of all problems which philosophy has to solve, the problem, namely how Reality, Value, and Existence are related to one another and how they are to be comprehended in the unity of a system. The story of the way in which Value, Reality, and Existence are to be conceived as related is the story of the development of the different speculative systems of Hindu thought. These systems recognize that there is a supreme Reality. They have an unshakable faith in the reality of a supreme Good without which human life is as naught. They admit that there is a spatio-temporal order of existence and there are finite individuals struggling their way to a region where the fetters of time fall away and time becomes 'the moving image of Eternity'. The systems firmly believe in these. And how could they not? Do they not derive their inspiration from the *Vedas*? But when it is a question of preparing an intellectual scheme which will supply the philosophical foundation of the triple faith of the *rishis*, faith in Reality, in Value, and in a world of spatio-temporal existence, the different systems diverge.

Shankara's philosophy is an attempt to

show that Brahman is the supreme Reality and also the supreme Value, and that the spatio-temporal world which represents the duality of value and existence is finally rooted in Brahman, and also that the individual self which at present finds itself to be part and parcel of the world of existence is, in substance, one with Brahman. Shankara criticizes the different systems of thought which claim to be vedic but which, in Shankara's view, are not so either because they ignore the ultimacy of Reality or dissociate Reality from Value. Samkhya and Yoga do not find favour with Shankara. The Purusha which is the supreme Value lacks the fullness of reality; it is not the source of anything. The Prakriti which is the type of all reality has in it no trace of intrinsic value. The insistence on the atomic, instead of the divine, constitution of the world in the Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems detracts from the full reality of God. Both these systems offer a conception of the supreme Value which is just the opposite of that with which the *rishis* make us familiar. The only absolute Value for the seers is the absolute Life in which the Self is reconciled to the world and the world to the Self. Shankara expresses this by saying that Brahman is the Atman and the expanding universe nothing other than Brahman. There is no *anatmanastu*, no not-self. What appears as the not-self is really the Self. The Self thus becomes the supreme Value and the centre of every other value. The universe is substantially one with us—this is the fundamental contention of Shankara's philosophy.

This truth is the imperishable insight of the vedic seers. This insight is the true religion. Philosophy is a reflective activity. It did not have its birth so long as there was an inexhaustible faith in the reality of the vision and in the whole cosmic process having its end in that vision. The vedic *mantras* represent this stage of Hindu culture. When there was a slackening of faith, the spirit of enquiry, which is what is meant by philosophy, had its birth, and the task which it found



as already assigned to it was to prepare an intellectual scheme in which these imperishable insights of the *rishis* could be preserved and harmonized in the unity of a system. Shankara belongs to this age of philosophical construction. He shares the faith of the *rishis* that there is something which man recognizes as the greatest value when his life is fullest and his soul at its highest pitch. He feels that his existence cannot be abstracted from it and his life is as naught without it. It is Value *par excellence*; but it is also Reality *par excellence*. The relation of value to being—this is the key problem of Shankara's philosophy.

## II

That the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara is primarily a philosophy of value is the fundamental truth which has been missed by his interpreters. What the modern philosophic consciousness calls axiology represents for Shankara a specific point of view from which he looks at the ultimate problems of philosophy. His insistence on this point of view means making the evaluational consciousness ultimate and subordinating the claims of logic and scientific understanding to the more pressing demands of the former. But when we say that Shankara's philosophy is a philosophy of value, we do not mean to suggest that his philosophy does not concern itself with 'Reality'. For Shankara Being or Reality is the goal of true knowledge and philosophy, a well-trodden path which takes us to the gates of the Real, having prepared us for that vision of it which is the consummation of the process of knowledge. The ontological motive has been the constant driving force of his philosophy. But it has been so because he has always recognized the value-character of the ontological predicates, and has never allowed himself to forget that for an ultimate reflection Value and Reality must be one. For Shankara axiology would be a collective name for a group of problems—epistemological, ontological, and cosmological; and the entire group of problems is focussed by him into

one—the metaphysical status of value. The two fundamental theses of Shankara's axiology are (i) that the philosophical notion of Reality should be that of 'Value' and (ii) that the *ens realissimum* is also the *summun bonum*, the possibility of realizing the true nature of Reality being also the possibility of attaining the highest Good. These two theses are, according to him, bound up together.

The very test of that which is existent or non-existent, real or unreal, true or false, is precisely an acknowledgement of the values involved and the validity of the value-judgments and distinctions. These distinctions depend upon, presuppose, and will not be possible without, the ideals and norms of truth and reality. To realize the value-character of the ontological predicates is to recognize that Reality and Value are one and inseparable, that to separate Reality from Value becomes meaningless, that the question, 'What is the real?' is a futile question, if being is abstracted from Value, for, as Urban points out, the question 'How ought I to conceive the real?' is logically prior to the question, 'What is the real itself?' To say all this is to say that the notion of Reality is that of Value. From this standpoint the truly ontological judgments are axiological, and the contrast between judgments of Reality and value judgments in any absolute sense will break down. We shall cease to separate ontology from axiology and, instead, we will have an axiological ontology and an axiological epistemology.

Reality for Shankara is an ultimate notion. Like Descartes he raises the question: Where shall I get a fixed foundation for my knowledge? and answers that the presupposition of an ultimate Reality is a necessary presupposition of intelligible thought. The affirmation of 'being' is immanent in every act of judgment. This presupposition is called by Shankara *astitvanishthta* or *sadbuddhinishthta*. This *sat* or Reality is Brahman. Buddhistic Nihilism, in denying a foundational reality, undermines the very foundations of knowledge and life. To say that Brahman is *sat*

is to say that Brahman is the Atman of everything. Shankara's conception of the Atman is the conception of the essence, of that which makes a thing what it is and without which a thing cannot be. The notion of reality becomes the notion of the Atman. This Atman cannot be denied, for to deny it would be to deny that which makes a thing what it is. It has not to be proved; it has to be acknowledged, being the basis of all proof. Brahman being the foundational reality is the Self not only of everything, but also of every conscious being. Brahman is therefore not only *sat*, existence, but also *chit*, Consciousness. 'An unconscious something cannot be the Self or essence or Atman of a conscious entity' (S.B.I.1.7). Accordingly, for Shankara, the problem of the discovery of the Self or Atman of the universe is the problem of discovering the self of the conscious individual, the *pratyagatman*. *Brahma-vidya* becomes *Atma-vidya*, an enquiry into the nature of the *pratyagatman*.

'Every one is conscious of the existence of his own self and never thinks "I am not". If the existence of the Self were not an ascertained fact every one would think "I am not." (S.B.I.1.1.). The reality of the Atman or Self is the basis of all epistemological and ontological enquiry. The operation of the means of knowledge, perception, inference, etc. proceed on the assumption that the Self is. This existence of the Self is not a matter of proof, or reasoning, the Self being the condition of such thinking and reasoning. Shankara, therefore, says that the Atman is *svayamsiddha*, *svatahsiddha*, self-evident or self-established. Shankara has been able to find a fixed foundation for our knowledge in the reality of the Self or Atman or in the acknowledgement of an absolute Reality, which for him is Brahman.

But it is just at this point that the difficulty about the reality of the Atman begins. What is the sense in which Atman or Reality is? What do we mean by predicating reality in an ultimate sense to Atman? What is the status of the objectivity of the Atman? When

Shankara predicates reality to the Atman and emphasizes its absolute objectivity, he means to bring out the truth that Atman is 'worth existing' that Atman is 'what ought to be.' Its ontological status can be described in terms of value predicates only. In the case of the Atman, as in the case of Value, its being is its validity, its worthiness to be. Atman is not being or *sat* in abstraction from value. Atman is, but in quite a different sense from that in which objects either of perception or conception are. The predication of reality to the Atman is not like the predication of a quality to a thing, for instance, sweetness to sugar or redness to stone. It is different from the attributive of predication of existence, for instance, when we say 'there is a cow', 'there is a pot.' It is Atman's worthiness to be, which constitutes its validity and confers upon the Atman the status of an *ens realissimum* and an ultimate Value whose denial results in contradiction. When we judge that 'Atman is *sat*', we do not merely bring the subject and predicate together as we do in the judgment 'fire is hot.' The former is a value judgment, in which, in addition to the act of bringing together the subject and predicate, there is the further act of acknowledgement that 'Atman ought to be', that 'it is worthy to be.' It is this act of acknowledgement that brings out the value-character of the reality of the Atman and also of the judgment in which Atman's nature as a value is embodied.

Every one of us is aware of the Self or Atman. The knowledge process is intuitive as well as judgmental. The noetic character of the awareness of the Atman can be described only as the 'recognition of or assent to a form of objectivity.' The word acknowledgement (*svayamsiddha*) brings out this aspect of the awareness of the Atman. Accordingly, for Shankara, the Atman is neither 'something to be rejected nor something to be accepted even', it is neither *heya* nor *upadeya*. One can reject something other than oneself; there is also no intelligible sense in which one can speak of accepting oneself. The noetic.

according to Shankara, has something of the valuational in it, namely, that no knowledge is possible without acknowledging that Atman is, that there is a foundational reality as the basis of all epistemological enquiry and all knowledge. While recognizing the valuational character of cognition itself, Shankara does not think that valuing involved in the awareness of the Atman is an operation supplementary to knowing as Sellar holds it is. In being aware of the Atman, in acknowledging an Absolute Reality, we have the consciousness that it is a value, that it is worth existing. Valuing is part and parcel of the cognitional process. This is the doctrine known in contemporary Value philosophy as the doctrine of the value-character of the theoretical. Not only is valuation noetic; cognition itself is valuational.

The Atman, the conception of which is put forward by Shankara as central to his metaphysics, is not the conception of an all-knower who, by knowing or being aware of things, maintains them, so to speak, in existence. It is hardly correct to think that the Vedanta of Shankara 'pushes aside everything objective, and relies on the Subject only.' Shankara's approach to the problem of reality is neither subjective nor objective, as Professor Radhakrishnan points out it is; it is rather an axiological approach. In Shankara the concept of God blends with the concept of the Self or Atman. 'Atman is Brahman and the Brahman is Atman.' In equating Atman with Brahman Shankara has two classes of readers in mind, one consisting of those who are of Descartes's way of thinking and hold that the Self of which we are indubitably certain is in its essential nature a finite and imperfect being; the other made up of those who are like the deists in thinking that the Self and God are entirely different realities belonging to different orders. Against the former Shankara points out that the Self is not a finite and limited being in its real nature; to the latter his rejoinder is that the God or Brahman who should be the proper object of religious devotion is not something

other than the Self. The metaphysical truth as well as the religious ideal is summed up in the formula 'Atman is Brahman.'

Shankara's notion of Reality as that of Value gives us a clue to his doctrine of ontological predicates. The predication of reality to a thing in the metaphysical sense has a value-character and the distinctions between truth and falsity, between Reality and unreality, and between Reality and appearance, turn out in his hands to be distinctions of value presupposing certain ideals and norms of truth and reality. For Shankara *sat* and *asat* are value concepts. *Sat*, for Shankara, is 'what always maintains its nature,' 'what is true no matter what,' 'what ought to be,' 'what must be acknowledged.' The notion of *asat* is the notion of something about which it cannot be said that 'it ought to be no matter what.' The 'pot', the 'cow' are, in this metaphysical sense of the word, *asat*, because of them it cannot be said that they ought to be, that their very being is their validity. But the case with Brahman or Atman is different. It is its essence to be *sat*. But, according to Shankara, to deny reality to a thing is not to deny existence to it; it may have a being for factual consciousness.

The notion of the Atman becomes the notion of the Absolute ground or cause, the very essence, the very self of the effect. The categories of cause and substance in their metaphysical use are axiological categories. There appears to be little justification for Deussen's remark that the Indians were never ensnared into an ontological proof. As, according to Shankara, Being is inseparable from, and the same as, Value, the ontological proof is really the axiological proof which asserts the absoluteness of the Value, not merely of *sat* but also of *chit* and *ananda*. Shankara develops further the implications of this axiological ontology, and argues that intrinsic worth and absolute Value must belong to what can be called an end-in-itself. The demand for an absolute Reality is the demand for what is an end-in-itself, what exists-for-itself, what

Shankara calls *svārtha*. What is *svārtha*, an end-in-itself, is also *svataḥsiddha*, self-established, for him; its being is also its validity. What exists for the sake of another can but possess a derivative being and a deficient value. In offering this as the test of all reality and the measure of all value Shankara intends to guard us against the validity of any attempt to give a relational definition of value.

Shankara further maintains that the concept of a value in itself, without any reference to consciousness, is inconceivable and rejects the idea of the absolute transcendence of value. He maintains that the concept of an absolute reality which is not also an absolute consciousness is an unintelligible concept. Such a reality lacks the fulness which it would possess, if it realized eternally and uninterruptedly its absolute being. Brahman is *sanmatram* as well as *chinmatram*. According to Shankara, Consciousness or Self alone exists for itself; it alone is *svārtha*. Spirit is the *terminus ad quem* of nature; the world of not-self, the *anatmavastu*, gets its meaning and value from spirit or consciousness of which it becomes an object. There is nothing in the world of not-self which fulfils Shankara's test of reality. The Self, the Atman alone exists for itself. The Self or Atman or Consciousness, which is set up as the supreme Reality, is not viewed by Shankara as a factual something, existing as a fact among other facts. It exists as one setting up an ideal, a standard, to which everything must submit; it makes itself felt as a law which is sufficient unto itself; it is conscious of itself as a self-justifying end. Shankara's appeal to *prajñānam* or to Atman in order to explain the very being of the world-fact is an appeal to a principle whose very being is its validity and whose awareness constitutes its reality. At any rate, the argument in favour of consciousness being the foundational reality does not proceed upon the principle *esse est percipi*, and its validity is not bound up with the disappearance of the world for the perceptual consciousness.

The Vedantism of Shankara is not inspired by Buddhism, and it is uninformative to affiliate it to Idealism and Nihilism of the Buddhist type. Buddhism, like Humian empiricism, treats the Self as a fact merely and hopes to catch it in its fulness by having recourse to introspective observation and empirical analysis; and it is no wonder that the 'existential' standpoint adopted by it and the empirical method incidental to this standpoint enables it only to 'stumble on some particular perception or other—of heat or cold, love or hatred, pain or pleasure.' Buddhism is never able to catch the Self as a stable entity and becomes content with a fluid self. It is not able to do so because it seeks it where it cannot be found and tries to know it in a way which is foreign to its nature. Buddhism is not able to grasp the metaphysical status of Self as a Value in a world of facts. This difference in the axiological and existential standpoints adopted respectively by Vedantism and Buddhism explains the difference in their watchwords. The watchword of Buddhism is: *sarvaṃ anātman*, all this is non-self; that of Vedantism is: *atmaivedam sarvaṃ*, all this is Self.

Buddhism no doubt offers us a notion of the highest value; *nirvāṇa* is the supreme Value and it is similar in certain respects to vedantic *mokṣa*. But Buddhism dissociates this supreme Value from Reality and does not show how Value and Reality can be brought together in the unity of one Self. For Shankara *mokṣa*, Self, and Brahman are identical. The supreme Value is the supremely Real also. Atman is both. It is high time that we learn to distinguish between Vedantism and Buddhism. And this we shall not be able to do unless we realize with Urban that the problem of reality in order to be solvable at all must be turned from a merely existential or logical problem into an axiological problem. This is exactly what Shankara has done. He has impressed upon us that the metaphysical notion of Reality is the notion of Value. It is this insistence on the profound significance of human life and of the Self as

a value and a centre of value which distinguishes the Vedanta of Shankara from Buddhism; for 'the man to whom his own life is a triviality is not likely to find a meaning in anything else.' History has yet to show how the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara came to be confounded with Buddhist Idealism and Nihilism.

### III

Atman or Self has been shown to be the supreme Reality and the supreme Value. But the Self is confronted with a not-self; the Atman finds an *anatman*. This duality of Atman and *anatman*, of Self and not-self, is the most persistent of all dualities and the final paradox of philosophical thought. This dualism sets up a problem, namely, the problem of reconciling the Self and the not-self, the Atman and the *anatman*. This problem of reconciliation is not a merely epistemological problem, nor is Shankara's solution a merely logical solution. It is the great problem of life and of the living soul who has awakened to the need of that life. An intensely religious soul like that of Shankara, who is keenly conscious of the distance which divides him from his Ideal Self, craves for that meeting-point where the ideal and the actual fuse into one. If the Atman is the supreme Reality and Value, it must be the measure of all reality and of all value. It must then determine the reality which can belong to the world of not-self. Existence, we may say, must have its being in Value. Shankara's celebrated commentary on the *Brahma-Sutra* opens with the exhibition of the dualism between the Self and the not-self, the Atman and the *anatman*, value and fact, and ends with the revelation that they are not strangers to each other, that the not-self is an expression of the Self, the *anatman*, of the Atman, fact, of value; and that the not-self, the *anatman* and the fact, while they are not themselves values, possess value which is derived from the Atman, the supreme Value and Reality.

There is an Integral experience wherein

all distinctions which constitute the very life-blood of finite existence fall away, the distinction between fact and value, value and existence, the Self and the not-self. This experience is nothing other than *moksha*. This *moksha* is for Shankara the same as Brahman. This highest experience transcends the distinction, which is sometimes treated as absolute, between what is and what ought to be. It is only another way of saying that Atman is *advaitam*, and the supreme principle of reality is 'wholeness,' 'completeness,' 'individuality,' anything which falls short of this can possess but deficient value and deficient reality. This principle is called by different names. It is known as the principle of *sarvatmabhava*, *brahmatmabhava*, *advaitabhava* or *sarvabhava*. The principle is expressed by Shankara as follows: 'This universe is myself who am all—this identity with all is his highest state, the Atman's own natural, supreme state.'

This wholeness is identified by Shankara with Bliss. The Atman's own natural state of being pure, absolute Consciousness, which exists for itself and is an end-in-itself and for which the not-self becomes transformed into the Self—this is known in the Vedanta of Shankara as Bliss which is another word for Brahman. This Bliss is not an attribute or a quality; and consequently it is not something belonging to Brahman. (*Brihad. up. S. B. IV.3.33*). It is not something which has its genesis in the attainment by a subject of an object. It is the very *svarupa* of the Atman, 'the state of identity with all, which is another name for liberation.' Pain and suffering are associated with finite life—a life wherein the Self finds itself opposed to a not-self. In this life the Self feels itself separated from the not-self. 'It is in conflict with that from which it is separated, and because of this conflict it is killed, overpowered or pursued. Thence also arises the desire for that from which it is separated; desire prompts it to action.' Failure to realize the end involved in the action leads to pain. In this way the regular cycle of pain and pleasure goes on.

As the Self or Atman is the highest Reality whose acknowledgement is a necessity of rational thought or of the intellect oriented towards value, similarly there is, according to Shankara, some supreme 'Good' which represents the realization of our most sustained purposes and the satisfaction of our deepest and most permanent desires. This 'Good' is something in which the entire world of not-self becomes reconciled to the Self, and is seen as its very manifesting life, existing in and through the Self; and in any attempt at severing it from the Self it appears as even less than a mirage, a barren woman's son, a flower in the sky, a snake in the rope, and silver in the mother-of-pearl. The supreme Good thus becomes the regaining by the Self of its own natural state of being an end-in-itself, a supreme living consciousness which fully reconciles itself to the world and the world to itself, a consciousness or life for which the distinction between the Self and not-self disappears, because what presents itself and is taken for not-self is finally seen to be a revelation of the Self. The Absolute Life becomes the Absolute Good. The most supremely Real is also the most supremely Good. Brahman is the Reality as well as the Good. The Atman, which is the *ens realissimum* for the value-charged cognitive consciousness, becomes the *summum bonum* for the value-charged conative consciousness.

Consciousness alone can be said to exist for itself, and only a self-conscious reality can be said to be absolutely Real. This is the supreme idealistic principle of Reality and Value, and when made ultimately determinative in a philosophical reference, it gives us an intelligible world which sets limits to the exclusive pretensions of the world of sense-perception, and defines the mode or degree of reality which can be said to belong to it. It has been pointed out above that, according to Shankara, the existential order is grounded in Value, in Brahman. The manifestation of this entire world consisting of names and forms, acts, agents and fruits of action, has for its cause the reality of the light

of Brahman.' And when we rise from the sphere of logic to that of religion it is seen as the glory of Brahman. But when we attempt to describe its nature from the standpoint of logical understanding, for which the duality of value and existence is an indispensable condition, the universe appears to entail this duality and discrepancy in its nature. It is neither Brahman wholly nor something entirely other than Brahman; for apart from Brahman it is as naught. The universe can be described neither as absolute Value nor as absolute non-value. It is characterized neither by oneness of value and existence nor by absolute antagonism between the two. It represents at once oneness and duality of value and existence, their inseparability as well as their discrepancy. Shankara represents this dialectical antinomy embedded in the heart of the world of existence by calling the world of existence *tattvanyatrabhyanamirvachaniya*—as being indescribable (*amirvachaniya*) either as Brahman (*tat*—that) or as something other than Brahman (*anyatva*—other than that). Its proper function is to direct our attention to Brahman as its source and its goal. Brahman manifested itself in different forms 'for the sake of making itself known. Were name and form not manifested, the transcendent nature of this Self as Pure Intelligence would not be known. When, however, name and form are manifested as the body and organs, it is possible to know Its nature.' (*Brihad. up. S.B. II. 5.19*). A detailed discussion of this point takes us to the most knotty problem in the Vedanta of Shankara, the problem of creation and the relation between the created universe and the Creative Source.

If the truths about Shankara's philosophy which I have tried to bring out and emphasize are realized, it will be seen that his philosophy has sufficient vitality in it to provide the philosophical foundation of a world-religion and a world-culture which are today in process of evolution. For there is no uncertainty that the religion and culture of tomorrow is neither going to be an eclecticism nor is it

going to be built up around the personality of any specially chosen prophet or divine. Man's awareness of a world of Value from which his own life is inseparable and an inherent and insistent craving on his part to 'conserve' value are sufficient guarantee for

the reality of religion and culture and their power to promote human happiness. Shankara's philosophy awakens us to the reality of this world of Value and to the inherent craving in man to make that world his own.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

A study of Indian religious hymns from the earliest vedic times down to the most recent periods, in Sanskrit as well as in other Indian languages, reveals the deep and broad spirit of our civilization manifested in an amazing variety of thought, emotion and expression.

Prof. Batuk Nath Bhattacharya gives in his *Indian hymns*, with the help of well-chosen quotations, a fair cross-section of the Indian religious mind that is possible within the limits of the article. ...

### RELIGION AND EDUCATION

In his address at the opening of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Building on 8 August last, His Excellency Sri C. Rajagopalachari made the point that the present-day university education has been a great failure since it does not develop personality and produce leaders capable of guiding society or taking charge of national affairs. The remedy, of course, lies in giving our university boys some sense of moral and spiritual values through acquaintance with our rich spiritual heritage. A purely negative attitude towards moral training in schools and colleges, which is prevailing now, is fraught with dangerous consequences.

He said: 'The most important equipment that a young man must get before he leaves his university is personality not learning but character. The men and women who come out as graduates have to learn everything and personality has still to be shaped only after

employment somewhere. This is most unsatisfactory when the burden of responsibility of the public service has increased beyond the wildest imagination of the previous generation of our public men .... Professors, students, members of our Parliament, the general public, the various Public Service Commissions, all agree that the stuff manufactured in the universities is not by any means good enough. The demands of the State are not met, although in numbers there is no question of insufficiency. There is deplorable inadequacy in quality. ... It would be no exaggeration if we admit that the gap between the needs of the times and the quality of supply from our universities is a yawning gulf. ... The atmosphere of our colleges is far too much vitiated by intellectual and moral confusion for anything like this to be attempted. ...

'The universities, I once again emphasize, must give the nation the leaders, teachers and administrators who are required in this complicated age to fulfil the duties devolving on the State and to guide society in its cultural life. ...

'Young men today are the sport of random and confused thought that finds expression in ephemeral printed matter of whose undependability even the victims are not unaware. In the great experiment which India has, in the evolution of her destiny, undertaken to make in our generation, there is nothing more unfortunate than the present state of our colleges and universities. ...

'Had our philosophy and our culture which

formed a great bulwark that protected India through past ages been intact, the mischief arising out of the inadequacy of our universities might have been of relative unimportance. ... The discipline and restraint and the sense of moral values which vedantic culture implies, have been almost completely jettisoned by the steady and unrelenting educational plans pursued during the last 50 years, which alas, did not furnish us with anything in place of the old inheritance that was thrown overboard. ...

I am not unaware of the difficulty of moral training. We cannot get the right type of personalities to live and move among the youth gathered in the universities, whose very life and deportment would without direct instructor compulsion of discipline be an inspiration. We get teachers vastly competent in every other respect. The greatest reluctance is generally felt in introducing anything in the scheme of school or college education which may be mistaken for denominational religious teaching. One must recognize the validity of the reasons and apprehensions that lead to this. But we may easily overdo all this.

We cannot afford to exaggerate our fears and rest content doing nothing. The crisis is far too real and grave. We cannot take a simple negative attitude on account of our hesitation. I feel there is a way to achieve the object. A comprehensive scheme creating opportunities for studying and understanding various religions and philosophies, including what goes by the name of classical humanism in the Western universities, namely, the thoughts of Greece and Rome would, all taken together, furnish an atmosphere and an incentive which will enable our boys and girls to seize the truth and assimilate the culture and philosophy of our own land without exclusive direct effort organized for that purpose. The indirect approach may achieve what may not be directly undertaken. ... Not by total

exclusion of all religion and spiritual thought but by all-embracing acquaintance and appreciation of spiritual thought of all kinds shall we be safe and shape ourselves properly.'

One of the greatest—one may say the greatest of all—difficulties that stand in the way of Indian reconstruction is lack of understanding of the real India. This is largely due to an almost exclusively Western education. As a result of this a general attitude came to be formed among the 'intelligentsia', created by Britain's contact with India, that the West represented something classic and standard to be imitated in every plane of life. Unfortunately, those who are still committed to this view are pathetically holding on to forlorn hopes, for the best Western minds now value their secular achievements far less than the Christian inspiration of their civilization. They clearly recognize that science and technology can be constructive of peace and happiness only in a Christian framework of thought. They have veered round to a religious conception of civilization, while many of us are attempting to refine the spiritual constitution of our society to a Western secular purity.

Some continue to think still here that we can unite hearts on the superficial plane of politics. If history teaches any thing, it shows that politics and economics are the factors which always divide and bring on conflicts, and that the principle of social unity has to be sought in a plane transcending these, upon the basis of love and tolerance, taught by the higher religions. Fanaticism attaches itself to all isms. It is a product of human weakness and ignorance. It can be cured only by spirituality derived from true and universal principles. To try to sterilize fanaticism by taking up a negative attitude towards religion and so helping to extinguish faith is to make for the absolute triumph of fanaticism and chaos.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE PAGEANT OF INDIA'S HISTORY.** By GERTRUDE EMERSON SEN. Published by the Longmans, Green & Co., New York, USA. Pp. 406. Price \$ 4.50.

*The Pageant of India's History* is a remarkable production of the year that has passed. Though the history was evidently undertaken for foreigners who want to know something of the literature and history of our country, its importance for New India can by no means be exaggerated. There are several Indian histories written by eminent Western and Indian scholars. Each one has its special merits; but so far, the books written by Western scholars have been vitiated by certain propossessions which make them of questionable value to the younger generation of our country at this date. The Sahibs' way of looking at the early periods of Indian History was to consider them to be a sort of narrow porch leading to the main building, which, in their eyes, was the period of British occupation of this country; and therefore the only period which was worthwhile for us to know, without, of course, the details of those incidents in which the British played the most ignominious part. They emphasized internecine wars, fights, murders, loot, oppression, tyrannies of every grade and description making it appear as if India had nothing else to show on the human side of the account till the British came to this country for our benefit. It was as if only with the introduction of *Pax Britannica* that this benighted heathen country came to be habitable for decent human beings—this was the interpretation of Indian history with which at least three generations of Indian students have been fed. Even Vincent Smith, whose books *The Early History of India* and the *Oxford History of India* enjoyed great popularity as textbooks in our universities was partial to the European point of view and treated Indian history from the angle of the ruling British caste to which he belonged.

The bigger modern histories of India, like the *Cambridge History*, are mostly for specialists with the specialists' lack of a proper perspective of the cultural history of the country, a defect, which makes them unable to see the wood for the trees. Now that India has achieved her independence we are expecting our own scholars to study and interpret Indian history aright both for this country as well as abroad. A number of Indian scholars are now busy retelling our history from a synthetic point of view, based on authentic data and evidences from unbiassed quarters.

The task, however, is one of tremendous difficulty for, even after eliminating the British imperialistic bias, national prejudices remain and then, again, for the early periods, authentic data are still lacking; only the spade-work has begun and we have to wait yet for years before a fully documented systematic and continuous history of the country is available. In the meantime certain

landmarks have emerged through the patient investigations of antiquarians and research scholars, and in a general way, it is now possible to cover a certain distance of a very wide area, without entirely losing our way in darkness. What the layman needs from time to time, is a skilled writer to make the fruits of laborious researches of scholars available for his study in an easy readable form. It is no small credit to Mrs Gertrude Emerson Sen that she is now first on the field with her *Pageant*, to remove this desideratum. And yet when we say this we do not imply that the book is not for the scholar, at the same time. It has all that a scholar requires without the dry-as-dust-ness that invariably accompanies her type of learning. Her book brings before us the results of most up-to-date researches in interesting Wellsian narrative style. As far as possible she has given us a connected history of the past of India without burdening her pages with pedantic footnotes etc. dear to the heart of the professed specialist. In almost every case she has gone to the best possible sources for her information and very artistically she has introduced her authorities in the main body of the narrative without even letting it appear that she is doing so.

Mrs Sen's qualifications for writing a history of India of this kind are many. She has known India intimately for many years. Her first notable effort in understanding the heart of India took the shape of a remarkable book significantly called *Voiceless India*, which elicited high praise from Rabindranath Tagore. Later, as the wife of a well-known Indian scientist, she started living in her picturesque home in a secluded corner of the Himalayas, where, safe from all distractions, she has been busy for years devoting her energies to the task of unfolding the past and present of India, her adopted country.

In this book, Mrs Sen has given us good measure, pressed down and running over to 432 pages, with maps and illustrations provided by her sister Miss Edith Emerson, who has also performed her share of the work in a highly praiseworthy manner. The subject has been divided into thirteen chapters. From a study of the Indian map (Chapter I) she proceeds in Chapter II, to tell us in a general way all that is known about the *Dawn over India*, which is a consideration of the earliest phases of primitive life here, culminating in the thrilling tale of the Indus Civilization of Mohenjo-Daro, of at least five thousand years ago, 'only a very short time after the Sphinx and the Pyramids rose in Egypt.' This was a civilization which was not confined to the Indus Valley alone but included in its orbit a great part of the farthest west and some part of the south of India as well. The stage darkens for a while and then she comes to her chapter on *Aryan Morning* where she relates the story of the old Indo-Aryans, basing her evidence, among

other authorities, on the Rig-Vedic hymns and the *Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The Indo-Aryan culture gave us our 'priceless heritage,' the power of synthesis and assimilation that India evolved through her upanishadic wisdom and the sure knowledge that there is but One in the heart of the many. India's genius in envisaging unity in the midst of multiplicity was all along fully demonstrated in the treatment she accorded to many different elements that sought shelter within her borders.

Primarily, for the past four or five thousand years India has been the home of two great basic types of civilization, the 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian.' Mrs Sen's careful study of these two elements side by side and the results of their intermixture, that provided us with the main pattern of Indian life and thought, is highly illuminating. It sheds a good deal of light exactly on that process of synthesis which we value most in our culture. Then follow the chapters that contain the story of Buddha and the great Buddhist sovereigns of India, Numerous new tribes and races of men, including the Greeks, came into India and each one of these contributed something of importance to the basic pattern of Indian life and thought. The Tartars, the Mongols, the Sakas the Huns, all have contributed to the common-stock and from all, India has taken something, absorbing and assimilating them, in turn, to serve her own purpose. In our university textbooks in Northern India the contribution of the south of India to Indian history is either generally neglected or summarily disposed of. Mrs Sen deserves our thanks for going over the whole subject in a very well-written chapter which she calls *The Dravidian Matrix*.

Her study of Buddhism, of Asoka, of Harsha, Samudragupta, the great age of the Imperial Guptas and the legacy that it left of art and literature at its best, in her chapter on *The Golden Age of Indian Civilization*; the account of the ancient Indian universities, and above everything else, her parallel studies of the religious, meditative and active India in the two last chapters, *Indian Culture Beyond the Seas* and *Indian Culture Over the Mountains*, are the high lights of the picture she sets before us.

One surely expects from a properly written history of India a record of the influence her people have exerted on the civilization of mankind; but the histories that we read are generally very disappointing in this respect. Scholars are now agreed on the possible contact of India with Babylonian and Egyptian cultures, and the details of the history of the intimate relationship between India on the one hand and China, Japan, and Indonesia on the other are now being slowly rescued from oblivion, while also the impact of Indian thought and discoveries on Western culture and civilization are no longer matters that can be looked askance. Reading through the last two chapters of Mrs Sen's history we begin to understand the greatness of the Indian past, the strong points of India's civilization, her capacity for expansion, her

inherent vitality that has lasted through the ages and the part that she has still to play in moulding 'not only her own future but the future of the whole Asian continent,' or more broadly speaking, the rest of humanity.

The account she writes of Indian achievement in positive sciences will make the Western reader pause before branding the East as wholly meditative and, therefore, unpractical. The legend that India knew only how to shut her eyes while the 'legions thundered past' is now gradually vanishing. The shallow superficial misinterpreter of the culture of the East will learn from Mrs Sen's pages the fact that the so-called mystic East does not at all despise science. In fact some of the fundamental truths of modern Chemistry, Astronomy, Mathematics, and even social sciences, including Codes of Government and Municipal Administration, were known to her and constitute some of her invaluable gifts to the world at large. India's *Upanishads* distinctly declared that both kinds of knowledge have to be mastered, the *Para*, which is the highest spiritual wisdom, and the *Apāra*, which implies the knowledge that gives one mastery over the sciences born of sense-knowledge. The false notion that India is only mystic and unfit for worldly aims has been belied particularly by the discovery of the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, who fully recognized even the darker propensities of man's mind. The argus-eyed legislator of ancient India had to provide safeguards for as many as forty different kinds of embezzlement, and graft in its varied forms among officials was not unknown even in the days of her remote past.

Indian civilization never ignored any aspect of humanity. It is no wonder Carlo Formici, the famous Italian orientalist wrote: 'I love India which on one side gives Buddha to the world and Kautilya on the other.'

Without a doubt the book will serve as an eye-opener to many in the West as well as in the East. We read here not only the political but also the cultural history of our country without losing our way in a tangle of interminable rise and fall of dynasties and incursions of numerous races and tribes of men into it. The second volume which will comprise a study of India's contact with the Muslim and the Christian civilization of the West, will, we are sure, be now waited for with eager interest.

The bibliography appended is select and judicious, but two more books might have been included in the list: one is Dr B. N. Seal's *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* and the other, Sister Nivedita's *Footfalls of Indian History*, the first one, remarkable for its solid array of facts and the other, for the vision and inspiration that it provides to every serious student of our history.

A cheaper Indian edition of Mrs Sen's very valuable book will be welcome for that only can give it the wide circulation that it deserves in our country also.

D. MITRA.

**THE FUTURE OF THE CONGRESS.** By ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI. *Published by the Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263 Hornby Road, Bombay. Pp. 33. Price As. 10/-.*

In this small pamphlet Acharya Kripalani gives us a penetrating analysis of the position of the Indian National Congress, pointing out the trend of its activities since its inception. He gives us glimpses into the mind of the Congress-leadership and its membership. He shows the difference between the Gandhian outlook and that of the Congress—the former, though appearing very mild, potentially contained the seeds of revolutionary changes, capable of altering the very basis of unjust social, political, and economic institutions; and the latter, though passing high-sounding resolutions, was essentially wedded to the no-change outlook, though here and there re-forming the old conceptions. He holds that because Gandhiji found out this character of the Congress mind, he separated himself from it. And further Sri Kripalani is of the opinion that the Congress outlook has remained the same even after Independence and thinks that the Congress, though it has to its credit great sacrifice and at present enjoys much popular support, cannot be an instrument of the revolutionary changes according to the Gandhian conceptions, unless it changes its character.

Acharya Kripalani's views deserve careful attention, as he is an ex-president of the Congress and was its General Secretary for a number of years, in which position he had the opportunity to study the Congress mind at close quarters. This pamphlet should prove an eye-opener to the Congress and spur it on to efforts to fit itself with the changing conditions, if it is to retain its popular leadership.

**WHY PROHIBITION?** By DR H. C. MOOKERJEE. *Published by The Book House, 15 College Square, Calcutta. Pp. V+221. Price Rs. 4/-.*

In this book Dr Mookerjee gives an elaborate survey of all the havoc done to humanity by the use of Alcohol. He uncompromisingly rejects the use of anything alcoholic, even when administered as a drug. To give the necessary basis to his claims, Dr Mookerjee adduces the judgments of many experts in the field of medical research. The greater part of this book deals with the effects of alcohol on the human mind and body, and the author goes into details, so as to give the essential emphasis to his warnings. It may appear that much has been painted too black. That does not, however, invalidate the essentially sound thesis of the book. The second portion of the book deals with the case of prohibition in this country in particular and gives a very sensible and objective opinion in favour of it, after a brief summing-up of the pros and cons thereto. It will be of great help in forming a sound opinion in favour of prohibition.

R.

## BENGALI

**PATRAVALI—PRATHAM BHAG.** By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. *Published by the Udbodhan Karyalaya, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Pp. 512. Price Rs. 4/8.*

Gandhiji once wrote 'Surely the writings of Swami Vivekananda need no introduction. They make their own irresistible appeal.' This statement is true more especially of his letters. One finds in these letters the growth of Swami Vivekananda into the great personality that the world knows. Here one comes into touch with his intimate thoughts, feelings and aspirations and all that he felt for the regeneration of India and the upliftment of the world. Not originally meant for the watching public gaze they represent the true expression of his inner thoughts and feelings. Many of the letters were written under great emotion and inspiration surging in his heart, and they infused the same into the hearts of those to whom they were addressed. Since their publication they have been of great source of inspiration to many. Nobody can read some of these letters without being electrified.

The Udbodhan Karyalaya is doing a great service in bringing out a complete Bengali edition of these letters. Swami Vivekananda wrote some of his most intimate letters to his brother disciples in Bengali and this edition has the advantage of presenting them in his own language.

The printing and get up of the book are good.

## HINDI

**KALYAN—UPANISHAD ANK.** EDITORS: HANUMAN-PRASAD PODDAR AND CHILMANLAL GOSWAMI. *Published by The Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pp. 776. Price Rs. 6/3.*

The publishers of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, deserve to be highly praised and congratulated on the excellence of the recent publication, *The Upanishad Ank* of their Hindi monthly magazine *Kalyan*, which has gained wide popularity in Northern India and is doing invaluable service to the Hindus by keeping them in contact with their cultural and spiritual heritage.

*The Upanishad Ank* is one of the valuable publications of the Gita Press and consists of 776 pages, very moderately priced at Rs. 6/3 only, which amount also includes the price of the ordinary numbers of *Kalyan* for the whole year. Besides incorporating thoughtful and learned articles from eminent spiritual leaders, scholars, and public men of India, the *Upanishad Ank* also gives a Hindi translation of fifty-four *Upanishads* in clear and simple words.

We again congratulate the publishers of the Gita Press for their laudable efforts in enabling the spiritually minded people of India to keep in touch with the gems of their ancient lore based on the *svanubhuti* of a long line of saints, seers and *rishis* at a time when the world is fast approaching a cataclysm and its people are vying with each other in excelling in avaricious behaviour.

DEVI DATT PUNETHA

## URDU

**MURAQBAT.** By Dr Mir Waliuddin, Professor of Philosophy, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Deccan. Published by the Educational Conference, Hyderabad, Deccan. Price Rs. 2/8.

Those who are interested in the study of Islamic philosophy, mysticism, and religion already know what position Dr Waliuddin occupies among first-rate writers on philosophical and religious themes. He has not less than a dozen books on weighty subjects to his credit which have won the appreciation of eminent critics and literary men all over India. His contributions have added weight and value to the Urdu language. He has implicit faith in religious values and yet he is convinced that religious tenets could not be divorced from reason and commonsense.

The book under review is his latest contribution to the deeper aspects of religious life. The theme of his book may be summed up in a few words: He says there is no use having a lip faith in God. Those who have well-reasoned and deep-seated faith in One Supreme Reality, called by various names, should have no fear of anything. If once a man establishes his relation with the Source of his being, who is the Giver of all goods, most beneficent, most merciful, most powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing, He can surely confer on him all that he prays for provided he prays to him sincerely and surrenders to His will completely. There is nothing which he cannot achieve through divine grace because He loves His creation and is ever ready to save the lost souls. He is ever ready to listen to the prayers of His devotees. The benevolence of the Lord is said to work in ways too difficult to grasp, since they do not follow any man-made laws; at the same time it affects the lives of the devotees profoundly. The Lord removes the barriers that stand between Him and His worshippers. He confers His Infinite blessings on His devotees. It is very interesting to note that even the most despised sinners and confirmed atheists sometimes come under the purview of the Grace of God. There is no power that can stand against God's love. We should not

forget in this connection that the devotees have also a part to play in order to make them a fit recipient of the divine grace. All religions point out that self-effort is also necessary, however weak one may be. No attempt for a virtuous life will go in vain, but will lead a person higher and higher in the spiritual life. All that we have to do is to purify our minds and hearts of vicious thoughts and tendencies. The Grace of God is the crown and consummation of religious duties piously practised. It is an end in itself and is capable of far-reaching influence in the lives of seekers of God throughout the world.

The learned Doctor, having stated his case in a lucid, convincing, and simple manner has suggested various practical means of acquiring the different kinds of virtues necessary for winning divine grace and achieving our objects.

He has assigned seven topics for seven days to be meditated on and pondered over in such a way as to assimilate them and make them part of one's inner being to be able to respond to and receive the inestimable privilege of close relationship with the Author of his being. He advises us to start this practice from Friday when one has to meditate on the Unity of God. Saturday is meant for the practice of Contentment. Sunday for patience, Monday for thankfulness, Tuesday for prayer for nearness to God, Wednesday for prayer for the attainment of livelihood, and Thursday for the removal of fear and grief.

The title of the book is rather significant. It is not meant in the mystical sense which means one-pointed attention to and absorption in one's own Higher Self. But it simply means whole-hearted attention to God and acquisition of necessary virtues to draw His attention towards man's plight on this earth. It is one of the most inspiring, instructive, and elevating books that have been published in recent times. It deserves careful study and thought and is highly recommended to all those who seek contentment and peace of mind.

Dr M. Hafiz Syed

## NEWS AND REPORTS

**THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA,  
SHYAMALA TAL, HIMALAYAS  
THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT (1948)**

The Sevashrama was started in 1914 in the Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, about 4944 feet above sea-level and nearly 11 miles away from the nearest Railway Station of Tanakpur. O. T. Ry. Nestled in the deep Himalayan forests, the Ashrama is a great help to the poor, sick hill-people of the locality. It is the one and only permanent source of medical relief to the helpless hill-people over a range of 30 miles. Moreover, the Sevashrama, being located near the trade-route

between Tibet and the plains, many Bhutias and members of other trading communities, who fall ill in the jungles or at Tanakpur, derive great benefit from it.

The Sevashrama has a Veterinary Department also, and treatment is given to animals like cows, bullocks, buffaloes, horses, dogs, goats and sheep.

During the period under report 7057 patients, of whom 63 were Muslims, were treated in the outdoor-section and 208 in the indoor-section, which has 12 beds at present.

The Veterinary Section treated 2305 animals during the year.

The total receipts of the Sevashrama for 1948 were Rs. 6612-15-6, and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 5645-3-9, leaving a balance of Rs. 967-11-9 in hand. The Sevashrama has at present a permanent fund of Rs. 24,800 only.

As the number of patients who are coming to the Sevashrama for medical help is increasing every day, it urgently needs funds to cope with the growing demand and to expand its useful activities. The following are its present needs: (1) Funds for the upkeep of the Sevashrama, (2) A Permanent Fund of not less than Rs. 45,000 for general expenses, and (3) a Permanent Fund of Rs. 25,000 for the Veterinary Section. The

number of beds also urgently requires to be increased, at least by four, and for this purpose endowments may be made at the rate of Rs. 2,000 per bed in the name of any near and dear relative or friend. Contributions to the Veterinary Department should be specified as such. Contributions, however small, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by Swami Virajananda, President, The Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal, P.O. Sukhidhang, District Almora, U.P.

The Management of the Sevashrama render their heart-felt thanks and best wishes to all the donors in cash and kind toward the expenses of the Sevashrama in course of all these years..

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA TEMPLE AT PATNA

### AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Patna (Bihar) has been carrying on charitable, religious, educational and philanthropic activities in Patna, the capital city of Bihar, for the last 27 years. In view of its many-sided humanitarian services, the institution has become very popular and it is daily visited by numerous devotees, friends and admirers of the Mission from far and near. But it is a matter of great regret that for want of funds we have not as yet been able to build a temple and a prayer hall where devotees may congregate to attend religious discourses and scripture classes and carry on worship from day to day. The existing shrine which is housed in one of the side rooms of our country-tiled residential quarters is too small to serve any useful purpose. It is moreover in a dilapidated condition. His Excellency Sri Madhava Srihari Aney, Governor of Bihar, in the course of his Presidential address on the occasion of the last birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna held on the 5th March 1949 in the Ashrama premises made *inter alia* the following observations: 'I particularly invite the attention of the public to the demand made in the report for establishing a shrine or a spacious prayer hall with a temple dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. I think the Ramakrishna Ashrama will not be complete without a temple and a prayer hall of this kind. The atmosphere of the temple and the prayer hall must permeate through and through among the boys and girls who will take advantage of the institution growing up under the auspices of the Ashrama.'

The proposed temple with a prayer hall is estimated to cost about Rs. 25,000, if the structure is to have R. C. roofing and a suitable dome over the shrine. We have up till now been able to raise only Rs. 5,000, with which some building materials have already been purchased. But we still require Rs. 20,000 to make our contemplated project an accomplished fact. Names of donors of Rs. 500 and above will be inscribed on a marble slab to be put up at the entrance of the temple. The foundation of the temple was laid on the 4th April 1945 by His Holiness Srmat Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. We hope the religious-minded people of our country would kindly extend their financial help to this noble cause and thus enable us to build the proposed temple and the prayer hall at an early date for the benefit of all.

Any contributions, however small, would be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by :

SWAMI TEJASANANDA

Secretary,

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama,  
Patna (Bihar)

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OCTOBER 1949

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BOMBAY, 30 JANUARY 1927

The sixty-fifth birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the day with great festivities at the local *ashrama*. At night, after the evening worship, the *sanyasis* and *brahmacharis* of the *ashrama* collected in Mahapurush Maharaj's room and expressed a desire to hear from him about Swami Vivekananda. He briefly related the events from the day of his first acquaintance with Swamiji up to the time of nursing the Master at Cossipore Garden House and the establishment of the monastery at Baranagore soon after. When the narration was over a *sannyasi* asked: Maharaj, were you and Swamiji ever together during your *parivrajaka* (the wandering) days?

Mahapurushji: Yes, I was with him sometimes and also we met occasionally at different places during our wanderings. Once *brahmachari* Haran of Kashi and I went out on a pilgrimage to the sacred places in the *Uttarakhanda* (a portion of the Western

Himalayas and the adjacent plains). On our way to Vrindavan we got down at the Railway junction of Hathras, where, we came to know, Swamiji had been staying with a railway officer. He was suffering from fever. On hearing it we went to visit Swamiji. He was very glad to see us so unexpectedly. In spite of the fever he made so much fun, cut so many jokes, and was so full of delight and mirth! Two or three days after we had arrived his fever left, but the body had grown very weak. He asked us to return after visiting Vrindavan. It was decided that on coming back from Vrindavan we should start for Hrishikesh with Swamiji, and we also thought that he would become healthy and strong meanwhile.

H—and I went to Vrindavan. A few days passed there in great joy. Is Vrindavan an ordinary place? It was the stage of a Divine drama. The spiritual atmosphere of the place itself is unique. From Vrindavan we went to Shyamkunda and Radhakunda. At a place on the road Br. H—had left his bundle of things and gone for answering a call of nature,

On return he found the bundle stolen. The little money we two had we used to carry on our person, but H—had kept separately a ten-rupee note inside his bundle. So he felt much grieved when the bundle was stolen and became afterwards very dejected. When next I met Swamiji and told him the story, he laughed loudly and made much fun. On returning to Hathras from Vrindavan I found that Swamiji's fever had relapsed. He was running a high temperature and had become very thin and weak due to repeated attacks from it. I then decided to take him to Calcutta instead of his staying there. He also agreed to that. Accordingly letters were written to Calcutta and the *Math* giving all the news. Now all the railway servants and other important people of Hathras had meanwhile become very much devoted to Swamiji. Wherever he went he would draw to him groups of men. Whoever talked to him once, became completely fascinated by him—such was his personality. They would not allow Swamiji to go. Finally we were able to persuade them to agree, and borrowing some money from a superior officer I started for the *Math* with him. This made H—very much displeased with me. His complaint was, why did I not go with him to Hrishikesh? He began to say to me: 'You have become a monk, why then cherish so much *maya* (attraction) still? Will it not do at all if you don't go with Swamiji? It is not good for a *sadhu* to be so much under *maya*!' and so on. I replied to him, 'Well, brother! we are, of course, *sadhus*, as you know, and should have no particular attraction for anybody—true. Yet we have still some *maya* left for our brother-disciples, and that is going to remain. This is the teaching of our Master. It is he who has forged this bond of mutual affection between us brother-disciples. Particularly, Swamiji is our crest-jewel. We do not hesitate at all to lay down our life for his sake. We shall consider ourselves blessed if we can serve him even with the blood of our heart. How can you know what Swamiji is?'

Listening to my words H—remained mum. I made arrangements for H—'s going to Hrishikesh through the devotees of Hathras. They bought his ticket and saw him off at the station.

I started for Calcutta with Swamiji. Meanwhile Niranjan Swami had left the *Math* for Hathras on hearing of Swamiji's illness. I think our trains crossed each other at Allahabad; none of us saw the other. On reaching the *Math* Swamiji was examined by Dr. Bipin babu. Under his treatment Swamiji recovered completely. . . .

Later on, after many wanderings, Swamiji went to Hrishikesh with a few of his brother-disciples. Days and nights were passed in hard *tapasya*, meditation, repetition of God's name and in discussion of Vedanta. Swamiji used to say that he never had such joy in life. It was the rainy season. Other *sadhus* would not be there generally then. The *satra* (alms-house for *sadhus*) was the only source of food. In those days Hrishikesh was a place truly favourable for *tapasya*. But now it has grown into a small township. After sometime passed in severe *tapasya* and discussion of Vedanta, Swamiji again fell sick of fever. Hari Maharaj, Sarat Maharaj and some other brother-disciples were with Swamiji. The fever began to rise continuously. No doctor or *Kaviraj* were there at that time. So all became very anxious for Swamiji. One day suddenly it so happened that the fever, after it had gone up much, came down gradually till Swamiji's body—the whole of it except the head which remained a little warm—became cold as ice and the pulse stopped. All speech and movement were lost—no hope was left of his reviving. All were at their wits' end and began to pray to the Master yearningly: 'O Master save us from this peril, heal Naren. And if You take him away, do not leave us behind but take us also.' All were in a great difficulty, but there was hardly anything to be done. . . .

One among the brothers went to the Ganges side. A very old *sadhu*, belonging to that

country and a permanent resident of Hrishikesh, was at that time bathing there. He asked that brother-disciple : 'Why do you look so downcast ?' The latter related all about Swamiji. Thereupon the *sadhu* came to see Swamiji and after examining him thoroughly said : 'Do not be worried. I am giving you a medicine, grind it with *peepul* and honey and apply the paste on his tongue. You will see that he will quickly recover.' So saying he went back to his cottage and gave a medicine that looked like ash. Immediately the other ingredients were procured and the medicine, after preparation, was applied on Swamiji's tongue as the *sadhu* had directed. And strange to say, soon after the application of the medicine Swamiji's body began to warm up and he felt much better. Thereafter listening to all that had happened Swamiji said, 'Why did you go to give me medicine ? I was in great bliss.'

Swamiji gradually came round a little. It was, however, decided that he should go elsewhere since it was by no means proper to stay furthermore in that terrific rainy and malarial season at Hrishikesh. But because Swamiji was still so weak, the problem was how he could move to elsewhere. At that time the king of Tehri Garhwal happened to come to that region on some business. Sj. Raghunath Shastri, a brother of Haraprasad Shastri, was then the private secretary of the Tehri king. On being informed of the whole affair, he arranged for a bullock cart from Hrishikesh to Haridwar. Halting at Haridwar for a few days, Swamiji came to Meerut. His brother-disciples accompanied him to that place also. Meerut is a healthy place. He came round completely after two or three months' stay there. One day during that period he said, 'This time I have learnt a great lesson. Henceforward I shall not be with my brother-disciples but will remain alone. What troubles you had to undergo for my sake ! You had all been out to do *tapasya*, but, look, without being able to do that you had to remain occupied in nursing me. Again, should any-

one of you fall sick, I shall have to nurse him more than that. Love for brother-disciples is also a kind of bondage. This bondage too has to be cut.' He carried it out too. Since then till the eve of his departure for America, he travelled all over India alone—nobody got any news of him.

Sannyasin : Were you at the *Math*, when Swamiji passed away ?

Mahapurushji : No, I was not there then. Ten or twelve days before that Swamiji had sent me, after a lot of inducement, to Kashi for preaching Vedanta there. I went to Kashi toward the end of June. When Swamiji had been to Kashi for the last time, I was also with him. At that time the Maharaja of Bbinga presented to Swamiji five hundred rupees so that he might start an institution there for the preaching of Vedanta. The said Maharaja had great veneration for Swamiji. He had left his estate in old age and come to live as a *vanaprastha* in a garden house he had made for the purpose near the Durga Temple ; he would not go out of the building compound. On learning that Swamiji had come to Kashi, he sent one day lots of fruits and sweets to Swamiji through one of his officers and humbly invited him to come to his house. He also sent word through the officer that because he had taken the vow never to go out of his compound, he could not go to pay his respects to Swamiji's feet personally.

Pleased with the Maharaja's devotion, Swamiji said, 'We are *sadhus*, why should'nt we go, when he has invited us ? We shall of course go.' He went to the Maharaja's place as invited. I also went with him. The Maharaja received Swamiji with great devotion at the gate and led him into the house. In the course of conversation he said, 'I have been watching your activities for a long time and have felt very much delighted by them. Your aim is very noble. Your presence makes one feel that like Buddha, Shankara, and other incarnations who came down to earth to re-establish Religion, you also have been born



for that purpose. My heart's desire is that your wish may bear practical fruit.'

He gave at that time five hundred rupees to Swamiji with the request that some preaching work might be done with it. Swamiji did not accept the money at the time and said that he would think over it afterwards. But only a few days after that the Maharaja sent the five hundred rupees to Swamiji, requesting him again to start some work in Kashi. Swamiji accepted the money then. . . .

On returning to the *Math*, Swamiji first asked Sarat Maharaj to go to Kashi. Sarat Maharaj did not agree to that, saying 'Kashi won't suit me.' So he urged me repeatedly to go to Kashi. His health was very bad then, for his diabetes had taken a severe turn. I

used to see to his taking medicine etc. and looked after his nursing. So I did not then go leaving his service. Afterwards, when he recovered to a great extent, he sent me to Kashi.

A Sannyasi: Referring to the Kashi *ashrama*, Master Mahashay (M.) used to say: 'See, the Kashi *ashrama* has come to life through Sivananda's meditations.'

Mahapurushji: How can that be? It is all due to His wish, His grace. The Master's ideas will spread more day by day. This is the power of the *Yugadharma*, the religion of the time. Consider, for instance, Bombay in the beginning; but now so many things are taking place! Still more will come in the future. All is His play.

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (VIII)

BY THE EDITOR

All that has gone before in the series has made clear the scheme of thought in accordance with which India's past history should be redesigned. Our civilization has developed on and from a broad spiritual basis; a deep spiritual element runs through the entire length of the story. It is this which makes the thread of unity. If it is lost sight of, the story will fall to pieces without connection between them, and will not be constructed as a whole. The spiritual view gives an insight into the nature of the problems India has been facing since vedic times and also the character of the solution she has made. It will give us the right perspective, where many things that still loom big in our eyes will shrink in stature, others which look small and insignificant will expand and come to dominate the landscape. That will naturally alter many of our judgments about India.

Each generation is apt to interpret the past in terms of its own ephemeral scheme of

thought. Such ideas do not yield sound judgments about civilizations. We need something that is fixed and constant and to which events can only approximate. Every age tends to worship its own peculiar achievements, its man-made idols, as something of absolute value. The Greeks passionately clung to the idea of the sovereign city state as of permanent worth, the Roman Empire was an ideal which inspired countless political theorists and actors in the middle ages in Europe. In our time, around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Western achievement as a whole came to represent something absolute, classic, and standard to be imitated by the rest of the world in every plane. The fascination still lingers among some rootless Westernized people to be found everywhere in the world. The catastrophic happenings of this century have however changed West's view about itself and has revealed to its best minds that there is something basically wrong in the concep-

tion of a secular scientific civilization. There are only two roads along which civilizations can travel, one leads to God, the other to Venus and Mammon. No high moral language can long obscure the true character of a godless culture. And Venus and Mammon, like Moloch, devour their victims whole.

The West itself has become critical of many of its conceptions and achievements since the Renaissance when it tore itself away from its Christian past, both good and bad. There is now consequently a change of emphasis from material to spiritual values. It is realized that material achievements can be worthwhile only in a spiritual framework of thought. It is clear that a person can be an efficient mechanic and materially well-off, while remaining a barbarian in all other departments of the soul. For this reason some of the things acclaimed in the last century as the greatest new events in history, like the nation state or political democracy, are not viewed with the same emotion by the educated person of today. A civilization, it is felt, must mean something more and deeper than technical intelligence, diplomatic skill, or even political ability.

Civilization is a process, a constant dynamic movement of society towards a spiritual goal. Its final aim is an attainment of the soul which we find manifest in the lives of saints and prophets. Thus, Vedanta alone can rightly interpret history and save human events from becoming a devastating futility, a purposeless 'hurrying and scurrying' of matter in the empty canvas of space-time. This vedantic Truth is not a conclusion of the human understanding but an experience of the heart open to all.

All civilizations represent in the last analysis certain spiritual truths. If a civilization is able to retain its original spiritual inspiration and can, when necessary, deepen and broaden its conceptions of Truth, it continues to live and survive all challenges; if not, it dies. Such deaths are not the results of blows inflicted from outside, but are suicidal, arising

from a failure of the soul. A culture dies for lack of spiritual vitamins, by transferring its allegiance to false gods from true ones, and not for want of material possession or power. Very often there are material and racial continuities even in the same geographical area while a civilization may be said to have been extinguished. This is gradually made clear by the adoption of new styles of living and thinking and expressions in place of the old ones by the same people.

Many civilizations have broken down because they were lured by material success into the naked worship of Mammon and Venus. Others have gone to pieces because the spiritual ideas they represented, while valuable for a time, proved narrow in the long run in the face of new social forces. In other words they proved inadequate to circumvent the conflicts of groups, races and cultures. Contrariwise, a civilization, in spite of its broad conceptions, may come to grief, if its ideas do not descend from the moral to the active plane. The idea has to be creative. Of course it is too much to expect of a people or a society that it should uniformly and continuously proceed along the line of progress. There is no progress in a straight line. Inside and outside challenges are continuous, for the very solutions of one time become the challenges of another. (An instance in point is the caste-system.) Societies, like individuals, suffer from periodic sicknesses and breakdowns, but in the case of societies the breakdown need not, on the analogy of a society to an organism,—which is false—inevitably deepen into a complete disaster. If, however, the creative spark is not entirely lost, it is enough to ensure the survival of a civilization, for then it can at any moment be kindled into a bright flame.

The basic problem of a civilization is, on this showing, how to lift up the average level of the masses forming the social rear-guard to the height attained by its creative minority. The creative minority is represented by the community's spiritual geniuses who are the spearheads of the spiritual evolution of

humanity—the *pathikrits*, path-makers, to whom social leadership rightly belongs. This idea has been graphically expressed in India by saying that the fundamental social task is that of transforming the natural man (shudra), who stands at one end of the social scale, into a spiritual sage (brahmana), standing at the other. Such moral perfection cannot be achieved at a bound but only through a gradual and continuous process.

The social problem thus reduces itself to one of effective communication. There are two ways of putting spiritual truths across to the common man. One is the method of direct personal communication from teacher to disciple; this is the most effective way. The *Upanishads* say that one can receive the highest wisdom only from an illumined teacher. Plato repeats the same thing when he says that philosophic truths can be transmitted only through direct communication. Though this is the only true and effective method there are unfortunately insurmountable obstacles in the way of its wide practice. Apart from other things, those who are to be so transformed do not all stand on a level, nor are they ready for the same thing at the same time. Unalloyed truth is too remote from the common understanding and a high degree of self-determination cannot be expected of the vast majority of mankind. One set of rules cannot apply to all and it is futile to adopt a language that is too lofty for the average man. For this reason the general social method has inevitably to be one of graded instruction through myths and institutions of various types. Pure truth has to be mixed with a heavy dose of common prejudices. The social drill consisting of suitable psychic artifacts, ideas and institutions, is an inevitable necessity. It necessarily means some degree of compulsion. It is easy, theoretically, to decry compulsion but not difficult to realize that it cannot be avoided, at least as far as we are able to see into the future.

The second graded method of social drill, however, can successfully operate if only there

is a real creative minority in the society and not a fossilized group trying to dominate over the rest and claiming positions and privileges which it has ceased to merit. A creative minority's hold on the people springs from its deep love and understanding of human needs, its spiritual charm and its acts of service; when these are lacking mere compulsion from top fails to hold the society together. Further, new forces are constantly coming into play in society from within and without. These call for fresh adjustments in the social situation from time to time. The time process converts old institutions into flagrant anachronisms, and unless we change our society in consonance with the needs of the time the overdue changes are sure to come catastrophically through revolutions which may sweep away on their tide both what is good and what is bad. These needs of the social dynamics require the constant services of creative individuals and classes. A civilization must be in a state of perpetual renewal.

The role of the creative minority in India has been played throughout her long history, above all, by the men of renunciation. Swami Vivekananda has magnificently summed up the constant social ideals of India in the two words, renunciation and service. In early days the brahmins, devoted to scholarship and spirituality, and rejecting material profit and power, played a substantial part in this respect. But this can hardly be predicated of them as a class in later times, though a handful of them could always be found faithful to all the virtues expected of them. Orderly social progress in India, apart from the inevitable element of human wilfulness, has repeatedly been thwarted by causes proceeding from sources other than national. Even Shankara laments in his *Brahmasutra Bhashya* that the old *varnashrama dharma* has broken down in his time. The old *varnashrama* order represented a complete social ideal. The vital element in the scheme which is valid for all times is that it conceives of life as a pilgrimage of the soul, in stages, to spiritual perfection

and society as a field of cooperative human action in which the different functions, *naturally* divided, maintain a just social balance. The ideal abolishes the dualism between spiritual perfection and social improvement. It provides a practical object of moral activity in the form of social service. True life is an art in the sense it is naturally creative of some value. An ideal social system is one in which each member lives by producing what he really likes to produce. Our lives are fruitful and beautiful in the measure in which we are able to express our true natures in acts of service and in harmony with others. A sense of worthwhileness in whatever we do always goes with true living. The old idea has been generally lost due to repeated shocks over more than a fifteen hundred years, so that only a caricature of it survives today. Unfortunately, in modern times people have gone from one extreme to the other. Promiscuity, which is a sign of loss of natural *elan* and consequently of decadence, has replaced natural differentiation of aptitudes and styles over wide areas. In modern society nothing and nobody seem to be in the right place. A legislator lays down or alters institutions and rules for a society of which he has little understanding and for which he often has only hatred. A man of commerce who fattens himself by taking advantage of the soulless methods made possible by the present economic system assumes the role of a social and moral leader. And so on. New social and economic forces disengaged by democracy and industrialism have brought on top men whose ideas and activities menace the very structure of civilized life. All this can only be remedied by a creative minority working from the bottom up and so making national leadership reflective of society's new needs and eternal values. . . .

The above is meant to be some sort of a preparation for making a right approach to the period of Indian history known as Islamic and extending roughly from the eleventh century down to the late eighteenth. This will be useful since without some conception

of a true frame of reference, the deep undercurrent of Indian civilization, and her peculiar problems and trials, we shall not be in a position to make a correct estimate of the events. The point becomes clear when we turn to the current accounts of the period which are extremely unsatisfying and inadequate, not for lack of materials, but for want of a right perspective and sound judgments. Things are viewed from a wrong angle or conceived in narrow terms, and the emphasis is generally wrong. This, as we have hinted earlier, was due to the uncritical acceptance of Western values. The measuring rods were taken from the West, while the deeper tides and the abiding values of Indian life were lost sight of. Attention was mainly directed to finding ideas and objects which could be easily forced into a Western framework. The vastness and complexities of Indian history were hidden by the convenient fiction—'India'. India was therefore thought as similar to a modern Western country or nation. Further, Indian history came to be patterned after the history of Europe with its three divisions, ancient, medieval, and modern. It can be seen that there is a contradiction between the two foregoing notions, but this was not taken notice of. The 'Hindu' period was equated with the period of antiquity (Graeco-Roman), the so-called Islamic period was held as an equivalent, a long-drawn equivalent, of the middle ages of Europe, and the British connection was regarded as the point at which the modern era began. The conception of a living, continuous Indian civilization going through ups and downs, ever renewing itself and developing consistently, was lost. The ancient past was regarded as 'dead' having only an antiquarian value. It was a sort of classical India conceived in terms of classical Greece and Rome. It was no doubt admirable in many respects, but its ideas were hardly applicable in our time. And admiration was bestowed upon it in the measure its ideals and institutions approximated to those of the modern West. The extraordinary enthusiasm displayed

on the discovery of the Kautilyan *Arthashastra* early in this century can be explained on this basis. India had a Machiavelli nearly two thousand years before the true one in Europe. Why, this brought Indians of the past nearer to the modern heart ! Even books on Indian philosophy written in our time strongly remind us of the tendency to force almost everything into the Western framework of ideas. It will not be untrue to say that a large part of modern Indian studies is a vast apology for Indian culture. The theme can be expanded into a voluminous essay. All this will of course disappear and will be replaced by more objective studies, but that will require deeper understanding and years of patient labour. A whole tradition of Indological research built up on a superficial basis will have to be patiently and slowly replaced by something more fresh and new and adequate. . . .

We shall only make a few most general observations regarding the period in this light ; more than that is not possible here.

First of all a few words about the terms Islamic period and Islamic invasions as applied to Indian history. We often use terms or notice things or aspects of them for convenience of study and analysis, but after a time we begin to think that these are the only realities or things which exist or the only and chief ways in which things can be viewed. The Islamic period and Islamic invasions in connection with India are such terms. To take the latter first : there were many invasions from outside during this period, namely, Arab, Turkish, Afghan, Mongol and Pathan etc. And of each of these racial or tribal categories there were more than one invasion. Except for the fact that these invaders (barring a few Mongols) shared the creed of Islam and came, some of them, with a few elements of civilization, they are not to be distinguished from the 'barbarian' invaders of the earlier epochs—the Huns, Scythians, Parthians and others. The Islamic invasions form part of the story of a long chain of invasions extend-

ing roughly over two thousand years. Of these later invaders, the Arabs, who were the first to appear on the Indian soil and who made the least impression politically speaking, were in possession of some kind of original civilization, the rest were brutal, stupid, and uncouth with the veneer of an adopted culture, but superb in military tactics and fighting qualities. The Arabs learnt a lot, first directly and then indirectly, from India. Later on they transmitted Indian algebra, numerals, alchemy, medicine, fables and other branches of knowledge to the West. In this way the dissemination of Eastern knowledge in the West by the Arabs contributed largely to the development of Western civilization since the Renaissance.

But the main political impression was made upon India by the uncouth Turks (the Mughals were also Turks), whose only strong points were their fighting qualities and abundant vitality. Broadly speaking a very substantial portion of Islamic supremacy in India really forms a chapter of the history of the Turks who, after their conversion to Islam, dominated the stage of world history for over five centuries, roughly speaking. In their heydays their political authority extended from the frontiers of Western Europe to the shores of the Indian ocean. The modern Turks have fallen very low from the old heights, and have even broken away from the main tradition of Islam, of which they for so long formed the armoured spearhead. This is an instructive point to which reference will be made later on in a larger context.

Second, taking India as a whole the rule of Islam was at no point of time universal. Only, on rare and brief occasions, Islam's sovereignty extended over nearly the whole stretch of the land. But this was nominal and over wide tracts of the country very superficial. For one thing, the attitude of the rulers was anti-national most of the time ; for another, they lacked the necessary skill and experience in administrative organization. Indigenous resistance even on the political

plane was never quite extinguished. Even in the very heart of Islamic authority, namely in the Gangetic Doab, there was a constant state of turmoil and the people under petty chieftains repeatedly and in spite of severe periodic chastisements threw off the alien rule. There are other more glaring and substantial facts which will be mentioned later on. In fact it was from indigenous powers that the political sovereignty of the land passed into British hands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for the vast political structure of the Mughals had previously been reduced to rubble by the nationalistic forces which rose like mighty storms from all quarters of the land at the fanaticism of Aurangzeb.

Loss of political freedom is a most serious accident for a civilization and is often a sign of real weakness. But such losses do not necessarily mean its death. Death is inevitable only in cases where a conquered civilization has suffered first an inner breakdown of the soul. It has often been found that the very political conquerors, if their moral and spiritual resources are inferior to those whom they conquer, are themselves swallowed up, flesh and bone, by their political victims. The essential thing is whether or not the conquered community finds itself exhausted spiritually. If it does not, and if its values are really superior and creative, it is able, sooner or later, to shape politics according to

the needs of expression of its soul. In other words, the society is bound to regain its freedom in every sphere. India had never reconciled herself to alien rule.

We can now look at the problem that Islam and Barbarism presented to India. The earlier invaders who had vastly increased the complexity of the Indian problem had by the time Islam appeared on the scene were either absorbed or in process of assimilation into the main traditional body. Buddhism was dying and being devoured body and soul by its parent whom it had repudiated and so come to grief. The process in those days, when propaganda was so difficult because of lack of quick means of reaching the masses, was bound to be slow. Besides, there was also the rigidity of the orthodox party. Further, movements and creative classes tend to ossify in process of time. For all these reasons, broadly speaking, there were vast differences in the social field, which greatly paralyzed national resistance to the new invaders. At this point Islam came as a tremendous challenge to the politically fragmented and socially complex India. The Islamic irruptions not only transferred the paramount political authority to alien hands but introduced a deep dualism into Indian life. It fractured the social and cultural unity of India and we are still engaged in the task of piecing together the broken pieces.

(To be continued)

## GERMANY AND INDIA

BY HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP

Germany got her first information about India during the Middle Ages from the Greek and Latin historians of the wars of Alexander the Great and indirectly through Christian legends like that of Barlaam and Josaphat which relates the life of Buddha in Christian garb. The first Indian work translated into

German was the *Panchatantra*, the famous book of fables. At the instigation of Count Eberhard the Bearded of Wurttemberg, Anton von Pforr rendered it into German (about 1480 A.D.) from a Latin version, which itself depended on a chain of Hebrew, Arabic, and Pahlavi translations. This so-called *Book of*

*Examples of the Old Sages* had a wonderful success and influenced German fiction greatly, in so far as many German tales are derived from it. Of course the geographical knowledge concerning India was in these ancient times rather limited; during the Crusades nothing but stories of marvel elephants and unicorns and the legendary priest-King John reached the North of Europe. Only a few occidentals, like the Italian Marco Polo, had obtained firsthand information about India.

When the great Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama had explored the sea route from Europe to India in 1498, the reports on India increased in number and quality from year to year. Abraham Roger's *Open Door to Hidden Heathendom* published in Dutch in 1651 and translated into German in 1663 gave for the first time an account of Hinduism from the viewpoint of a Catholic Missionary. Some preachers of the Christian Faith like the Father Henry Roth (about 1650) and J. E. Honxleden (died in 1732) did pioneering work in the investigation of the Sanskrit language, and the Protestant Missionary Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (died in 1719) wrote works on Tamil grammar and the religion of Malabar.

The men hitherto mentioned lived at a time before the real scientific study of Indology was inaugurated by Sir Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785), Sir William Jones' English renderings of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalā* (1789) and *The Ordinances of Manu* (1794), and Sir H. T. Colebrooke's famous *Essays*.

The first German scholar who knew Sanskrit and wrote a book on Indian religion and philosophy was Friedrich Schlegel. In 1802, during his stay in Paris for the purpose of studies, he made the acquaintance of an Englishman, Alexander Hamilton, who had learnt the Sanskrit language in India. On his return Hamilton was detained in France, because Napoleon had enforced the isolation of England from the Continent. This circumstance, very unhappy for Hamilton himself, turned out to be a very great boon for German

science, because it enabled a brilliant young German poet to study a language for which it was very difficult at this time to procure a teacher or a grammar. After his return to Germany Friedrich Schlegel published in 1808 a book *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (On the language and Wisdom of the Indians) which contributed greatly to direct the attention of men of letters to a hitherto almost entirely hidden domain of knowledge. Friedrich Schlegel later on abandoned his Sanskrit studies but his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel, the famous translator of Shakespeare's plays, made it the study of his life. He published text-editions of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Rāmāyana*. Since 1818 he occupied the first chair of Indology established in Germany at the newly founded University of Bonn.

A contemporary of the Schlegels was Francis Bopp, the celebrated investigator of Comparative Philology. He wrote a work on the *System of Conjugation in the Sanskrit Language* (1816) and published critical editions of the story of Nala and Damayanti and other parts of the *Mahābhārata*.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the interest taken in India was very common with German poets and philosophers. Goethe was a great admirer of *Shakuntalā*, *Meghadūta*, and *Gītugovinda*; the Indian custom of beginning a play with a prelude on the stage, induced him to imitate this in his celebrated *Faust*. The poet Friedrich Rückert, who possessed a stupendous knowledge of many Oriental languages, acquired fame by his skilful imitation in German verse of even the most difficult passages of Sanskrit *kāvya*s like Bharavi's *Kirātārjunīya*. Wilhelm von Humboldt, who for many years held the office of Minister of Instruction in Berlin also knew Sanskrit; we owe to him a brilliant paper on the *Bhagavadgītā*, which he read in the Royal Academy of Sciences in 1825. It stands to reason that the German philosophers of the time were greatly attracted by Indian wisdom. Already Immanuel Kant, though indebted for his

knowledge only to books of travels, had occupied himself with Hinduism and Buddhism<sup>1</sup>; now that good translations of original texts had become available Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer dealt explicitly with Indian metaphysics. It is well known that Schopenhauer considered the *Upanishads* as the 'solace of his life and death' and that he greatly venerated the Buddha, whom he called the greatest philosopher the world has ever seen besides Plato and Kant.

The whole of knowledge on ancient India acquired during the first half of the nineteenth century was in a very able form collected and summarized in the four volumes of Christian Lassen's *Indische Altertumskunde* (Indian Archaeology, 1843-1862). A Norwegian by birth, he was a pupil of Schlegel and succeeded him in the Chair of Indology at Bonn, which being then the capital of Sanskrit learning was called the Benares on the Rhine.

Since the establishment of the first professorship of Indology in 1818 Sanskrit was taught by and by in almost all of the German Universities existing at that time, but so great was the number of scholars who had devoted their life to this study that some of them were called to foreign countries requiring the services of Sanskritists. The most prominent of these was F. Max Müller. Born in 1825 in Dessau as the son of the poet Wilhelm Müller, famous for his enthusiastic intercession for the Greeks in their struggle for liberty, he was a pupil of the great French Savant Burnouf<sup>2</sup>. Still a youth he began his edition of the *Rigveda* with the help of a subsidy by the East India Company, which was published from 1849 to 1875. In 1850 he became a Professor in Oxford where he lived until his death in 1900. Besides his monumental work

he wrote many books on comparative religion, the *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, on the sayings of Ramakrishna etc. Further he edited the fifty volumes of the great collection, *Sacred Books of the East*. Max Müller opened a long line of German scholars in British service employed either in England (namely, Theodore Goldstücker in London, Theodore Aufrecht and Eggeling both successively professors of Sanskrit in Edinburgh) or in India, namely, Kielhorn, Bühler, Hoernle and Thibaut.

Since the time of Max Müller the study of the *Veda* has always been a chief object of German Indologists. It is therefore not astonishing that all the four vedic *Samhitās* have been critically edited for the first time by Germans: the *Rigveda* by Max Müller and by Th. Aufrecht, the *Sāmaveda* by Th. Benfey (1848), a scholar who later on devoted himself chiefly to the study of the *Panchatantra* and its migrations in world literature, the *Yajurveda* by Albrecht Weber (1852, 1871) and by Leopold von Schroeder (1881, 1900), the *Atharvaveda* by Rudolph Roth (1856). Among the long series of scholars who later on endeavoured to translate vedic hymns and to unravel the mysteries of vedic Mythology only the names of H. Grassmann, A. Ludwig, K. Geldner, H. Oldenberg, A. Hillebrandt, and H. Luders may here be quoted.

During the first decades of Sanskrit studies German Indologists made use of English dictionaries. These being very expensive and not easily procurable the poet Ruckert had copied out for his own use the whole of Wilson's dictionary. Bopp (1850) and Benfey (1865) composed German glossaries for the use of students, and Theodore Goldstücker, an unfinished Sanskrit Dictionary in English (1855). The first comprehensive great German Dictionary of the Sanskrit language in seven volumes was compiled by Otto Bohtlingk and Rudolph Roth, and published in the period 1852-1875 by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. After its completion Bohtlingk wrote another smaller but still

<sup>1</sup> The hitherto almost unknown passages of Indian religions in Kant's books and lectures are collected in my work, *Kant and the Religions of the East (German)*, to be published this year in the *Internationaler Universitätsverlag* in Tübingen.

<sup>2</sup> See Louis Renou's article *India and France in Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1949.



more copious dictionary, which also was sponsored by the Russian Academy (1879-89). In these two works Germany possesses an exhaustive thesaurus to which generations of Germans owe the best of their knowledge about Indian language and literature. In the sixty years which have elapsed since the completion of the smaller *Petersburger Worterbuch* (abbreviated as 'p.w.', in contradistinction to the larger work, generally quoted as 'P.W.') many texts have become known whose words are not yet incorporated in these dictionaries. Supplements have therefore been published by Richard Schmidt in 1924-28. As even these supplements are not sufficient, it is to be hoped that the new exhaustive Sanskrit-English Dictionary being prepared in Poona will fill up this gap. In 1887 Professor Cappeller edited, on the basis of the *Petersburg Dictionaries*, a very useful small Sanskrit-*Worterbuch* of 550 pages for the use of beginners; an enlarged English edition of this was published some years later. It may be mentioned here that the second edition of the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Sir M. Monier-Williams, originally published in 1872, is to a large extent due also to German indologists, for the new edition of 1899 was written with the collaboration of E. Leumann and C. Cappeller.

It is impossible to enumerate here the names of all German scholars who dealt with Indian classical poetry and drama; suffice it to state that the most prominent *kāvya*s and *nāṭaka*s can be read in German translation; some works have been translated very often. *Shakuntalā* more than ten times, *Vikramorvashīya* five times, *Mricchakatika* four times, *Dashakumāracharita* three times. Of Amaru's and Bhartrihari's stanzas there exist a great number of German renderings. That the Indian books of fables have frequently been translated into German (literally in prose, or alternatively in prose and verses, or in children's editions) requires no explanation. Panini's grammar has been translated into German by Otto Bohtlingk (1839, second ed. 1887), and the

late Professor Liebich has made a special study of the classical old Grammarians. Several Indian Law Books have been translated into English by Bühler and Jolly in the *Sacred Books of the East* series; some others also exist in German translation. Of Kautilya's *Arthashāstra* there is an excellent German rendering by the American-Swiss scholar Johann Jakob Meyer. Even Vatsyayana's famous *Kāmasutra* has been translated into German.

The above-mentioned late Prof. Jolly in Würzburg was both an authority on Indian Law and on Indian Medicine. He wrote standard works on both the subjects, for which reason he was awarded the Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Law and of Medicine by German Universities.

The interest in philosophy being very keen in Germany at all times there have always been many scholars working in this field. There are several translations of the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Richard Garb wrote on Sankhya, Max Müller, E. Roer. A. Winter and E. Hultsch on Nyāya-Vaisheshika. The greatest achievements in this field are due to a man who was no Indologist proper but a philosopher—to Paul Deussen, who from 1889 until his death in 1919 occupied the chair of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. Born in 1845 as the son of a Protestant parson he began by studying theology; deeply influenced by Schopenhauer's teachings he took up the study of Sanskrit and became an enthusiastic follower of Shankara. His spare time as a private tutor in a Russian family he used for the study of Advaita, and he gave the first great exposition of Shankara's system of Vedānta (1883). To his German renderings of the *Sūtras of Vedānta with Shankara's Commentary* (1887) he presently added a translation of *Sixty Upanishads* (1897), and in collaboration with his pupil Otto Strausz, of the philosophical texts of the *Mahābhārata* (1906). Of the six volumes of *History of Philosophy*, the first three deal with Indian philosophy, the remain-

ing ones with the philosophy of Greece, of the Middle Ages and of Modern Times from Descartes to Schopenhauer. Among German philosophers of his time there was no one who so thoroughly understood the importance of Vedānta for the West. A similar position may be assigned to the Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto. He possessed a fair knowledge of Sanskrit and was a great admirer of Ramanuja. Besides many theological works he has published several translations of Vaishnava texts and has done much to gain for Hinduism the place in Comparative Religion which it deserves.

Besides these scholars almost exclusively interested in Sanskrit and Hindu literature there are others who, though also working in this domain, are best known by their studies of Prakrit and Pali and the two great religions whose writings are written in these languages, viz. Jainism and Buddhism. Besides Albrecht Weber, the first editor of Hala's poems, and Richard Pischel, who wrote a Prakrit Grammar, we may mention Hermann Jacobi and Ernst Loumann, who have done much in elucidating the history and dogmatics of the Jains.

Among the many workers on Pali Buddhism the first place is due to Hermann Oldenberg, the famous editor and translator of the *Vinaya* texts and author of a book on Buddha, which in its twelve German and three French editions has been for a long time the standard authority on Gautama's life and doctrine. Wilhelm Gieger translated into German a part of *Samyutta-Nikāya*, into English from the Ceylonese chronicles. He supervised also the research work for the new Singhalese Dictionary.

A large amount of fresh material on the history of Buddhism and its literature has been brought to light by the Prussian expeditions to the Eastern Turkestan by Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Lecoq. They have published books on Indian Art and connection with the West. The most famous of the German scholars who deciphered the

manuscripts found in Turfan was Heinrich Luders collaborating with his wife, who succeeded in editing fragments of manuscripts of lost Buddhist texts. It is a regrettable fact that Mahayana Buddhism has till now found only a limited number of research-workers in Germany (like professor Walliser); it has always been the chief domain of French and Belgian scholars.

The German standard work on the history of Indian Literature are the three volumes of Maurice Winternitz, the late professor of Indology at the German university of Prague. The two first volumes have appeared also in English.

The time from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the first World War, during which all the above-mentioned scholars lived, is the golden age of German Indology. It was the time in which Sanskrit studies flourished at almost all of the German Universities and conquered for Indian literature a place of honour in the *universitas literarum*. The vicissitudes of two last wars and the time of unrest that followed were not favourable to the development of science in Germany; it is therefore a regrettable fact that a number of Sanskrit Chairs at the German Universities have been curtailed. Nevertheless, the studies are still flourishing, and the number of Professors of Sanskrit is still greater in Germany than in any other country of the Western world, inclusive of the United States.<sup>3</sup> This is the more remark-

<sup>3</sup> An alphabetical list of the German Universities with the names of the professors and lecturers of Indology and their respective special branches of study:

BONN: Prof. Kiefel (Purana, Jainism, Medicine), Dr. Losch (Purana, Dharmashastra), Dr. Hacker (Vedānta); FRANKFURT: Prof. Loumel (Veda); GOTTINGEN: Prof. Waldschmidt (Buddhism, Archaeology), Dr. Steche (Hindi); HALLE: Prof. Thieme (Veda); HAMBURG: Prof. Schubring (Jainism); JENA: Dr. Hauschild (Veda, Hindi); JEL: Prof. Schrader (Hinduism); LEIPZIG: Prof. MÄRK: Weller (Indian, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism); Prof. Nobel (Indian, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism); MUNICH: Prof. Oertel

able because Germany has never ruled over any part of India as other European nations have done. Her aim has always been a purely scientific and spiritual one, following the well-known sentence of the famous poet Heinrich Heine: 'Portuguese, Dutchmen, and English have brought home on their great ships the wealth of India, we Germans always took a back seat, but we shall not do without the spiritual treasures of India. Our Universities will be our factories for these.'

The interest of the largest number of German Sanskritists being philological and historical, the study of India's past, her language, culture and religion, has always been the chief aim of German Indologists. This explains the fact that the modern Indian languages have not been adequately represented. Besides missionaries who translated some works from the vernaculars there were only a few men who went deeply into the literature and culture of the new Indian Aryan and Dravidian peoples. This has been the work of a few German scholars, whose death a few years ago was much lamented. I mention the former foreign Minister Dr Rosen, a good specialist in Persian, who translated Amanat's *Indarsabha* and wrote a sketch of Urdu Literature, Dr Reinhard Wagner, a well-merited Bengali scholar, Professor H. W. Schomerus and Dr Beythian, to whom we are indebted for a Tamil Grammar and a work on Shaiva Siddhanta respectively. It is to be hoped that India being now independent, the study of modern Indian languages will be fostered also in Germany, an aim which might

well be realized by an exchange of professors and students between German and Indian Universities.

The number of Germans who learn Indian languages, who read ancient Indian texts in translations, or who follow the scientific works of the Indologists is, of course, small compared to those who take a general interest in Indian literature.. The most widely read Indian author is Rabindranath Tagore, whose visits to Germany are still remembered. Many of his works have been translated into our language, mostly from English, and some of his plays such as *The Post Office* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* appeared on the stage. Dhan Gopal Mukherji and some other Indian writers are also widely read. The death of Mahatma Gandhi made a very deep impression on the German public, and there were many demonstrations of sympathy both in the several German parliaments and in philanthropic societies. In memory of the deceased great Indian the University of Tübingen arranged a special gathering at which the writer of these lines had the privilege of delivering a lecture on Gandhi's life and work.

Although Germany may be separated from India by large stretches of land and water, yet the bonds of sympathy, formed at the beginning of the last century, continue to unite the two countries in mutual appreciation and friendship. To the Spirit distances are naught, as says a Sanskrit poet :

*Durastho'pi na durasthah svajanānām  
suhrijjanah*

*Chandrah kumudakhandānām durastho'pi  
prabodhakah*

'Even if he is far away, a friend will not seem remote to a friend; the moon though far away yet awakens the lotus of the *Sutras* of Commentary (1887)

— a translation of

(Veda), Prof. Helmuth Hoffmann (Indian and Tibetan Buddhism); MUNSTER: Prof. Alsdorf (Prakrit and Jainism); TUBINGEN: Prof. v. Glasenapp (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism), Prof. Hermann Weller (Drama).

Unselfish and genuine zeal for real scholarship and (1897), and in collaboration with become dominant in the life of our country's pupil Otto Strausz, of the philosophical nations a rank worthy of their own Bhar texts of the *Mahābhārata* (1906). Of the by Otto six volumes of *History of Philosophy*, the first (1887), and the three deal with Indian philosophy, the remain-

# 'RAM'S WISH'

OR

## BRAHMACHARI RAM MAHARAJ

By GERTRUDE EMERSON SEN

Ram Maharaj has left the most unforgettable impression on me. He lived for over thirty-five years in the Ashrama at Almora in the Himalayas and became almost an institution to the local people. Though generally called Ram Maharaj, to his brother-disciples of the Ramakrishna Order he was affectionately known as *Ramer Ichchha*—'Ram's Wish', or the 'Lord's Wish'.

The name was derived from a favourite story of Sri Ramakrishna's. One should live in this world non-attached, Sri Ramakrishna used to say to his followers, surrendering oneself to the Lord's will, like a certain pious weaver. This weaver was loved and trusted by everybody. If anyone asked the price of a piece of cloth, he would reply: 'By the will of Ram, the price of the yarn in one *rupee* and of the labour four *annas*. By the will of Ram, the profit is two *annas*. So the price of the cloth, by the will of Ram, is one *rupee* six *annas*.' One night when he was sitting down as usual after the day's work to meditate on Ram, some robbers came along and forced him to carry their stolen goods on his head. The party was soon intercepted by the police, but the robbers ran away while the unfortunate weaver was left behind with the incriminating load on his head. Next morning, accused of theft, he was dragged before a magistrate.

'Your Honour,' said the weaver, 'by the will of Ram, I finished my meal at night. By

will of Ram, as I was thinking of God and history of *Burne* and glory, by the will of been brought to light—passed that way. By tions to the Eastern Turk—robbery and Grünwedel and Albert von Lecoq—the have published books on Indian Art and connection with the West. The most famous of the German scholars who deciphered the

Honour.' Convinced that such a pious man could never have committed robbery, the magistrate dismissed the case. Upon reaching home the weaver remarked to his friends, 'By the will of Ram, I have been released.'

So, too, Ram Maharaj found the Lord's hand in every trivial happening, and nothing was too small to escape the net of His direct intervention. When some of the other monks termed this a 'dangerous philosophy,' insisting that if we are to attribute everything to the Lord, then we automatically excuse ourselves from responsibility for our own evil deeds, Ram Maharaj simply smiled. 'It doesn't matter what you say,' was his rejoinder. 'What you say doesn't affect Ram in the least.' The conclusion being, of course, that one who really believes in the Lord with his whole heart and soul, as Ram Maharaj did, will soon become incapable of evil deeds. The simplicity of his living and believing were wonderfully reflected in his face. It was really a joy to look at him. It was more than fifty years since he had renounced the world and become a *sadhu*, but his face was vibrantly alive. Well-defined black brows made an almost straight line over large expressive dark eyes. His colouring was light by Indian standards, and a curly grey beard, white in patches, lent soft finish to a face that was often singularly beautiful. He weighed less than ninety pounds, but he had retained an amazing suppleness. Fingers and toes appeared to have no joints at all. When he made his prostrations in our little meditation room, as he invariably did on entering the house, he simply folded up into nothing at all.

His clothes were the usual apricot-coloured garments of the Indian monk—a cap and a *MARL*—a shirt underneath, and a lower (Buddhism): wrapped round like a skirt.

In winter the cap and an extra coat he then put on were of grey woollen material, supplied by our local weaving industry. Never, by choice, would he wear or use any thing of mill manufacture. He always maintained that coarse home-spun and hand-woven cloth felt infinitely pleasanter next to the skin than any mill produce however fine.

His habits were so regulated and co-ordinated that he was really an institution by himself. Summer and winter he arose at that exact moment when the thin streak of the single telegraph wire linking our town with the outside world first became visible in the grey half-light of dawn across the window-patch. He needed no mirror to dress by, and he had never even thought of acquiring one. It was only after he had intently studied many snapshots of himself, taken by us, that he announced one day, 'Now I know what I look like.' Each hour of his day had its little specific duty or pleasure. He sat on the floor of his room for his main meal at precisely one o'clock and again for his supper at nine p.m. But at different intervals between rising and going to bed, he would consult the large nickel watch kept in its original red cardboard box, and pour out a cup of hot water or hot milk, or munch the two daily almonds or the four daily raisins he allowed himself, or eat a bit of apple, half an orange, or a piece of sugar candy. Apart from these small extras which he ate with relish, his regular food, year in and year out, was a monotonous diet of rice and dal or unleavened bread with a handful of vegetables.

On Sundays, his normal routine had of necessity to be slightly varied, since this was the official 'invitation day' when he lunched with us. If Sunday happened to coincide with either of his two monthly fast-days, however, he would come on Saturday or Monday instead. In any case, he had made his position clear at the very outset : 'Fifty-two times a year I must take my food in your house.'

Until eleven every morning, the door of his room over the Ashram kitchen, remained tightly closed, and nobody was allowed to dis-

turb him until he himself opened it. This was the time inviolably set apart for his religious meditations. When those were over, he was ready for his morning walk, along the road leading past the Leper Asylum and out around Granite Hill and Pine Forest. As he walked, he vigorously plied his Indian tooth-stick. In the afternoon, he attended to his letters and accounts, and joined the Ashram study class for two hours. Then came the evening walk in our direction. On his return, he would regularly stop at our house to rest and chat and to sip his last-but-one of four cups of warm milk.

We might have visitors, but Ram Maharaj's ritual remained unbroken. As a matter of fact, he enjoyed meeting and talking to people—in his own brand of simple English if they were foreigners, otherwise in his native Bengali or Hindi. Many of our friends—Louise, Angela, Beatrice, Elsie and Walter—learned to love and admire him. When they went home again to England or the USA. from time to time they would write to him or send him picture post-cards, and these he would bring over and slowly read aloud to us, with the help of a magnifying-lens fished from his pocket. I received a letter from Louise only this morning. After inquiring about Ram Maharaj, 'that pure and enlightened soul,' she pays him this tribute : 'I have not been able to show him much in the last years how deeply I owe what understanding I have to him, but if he still remembers me, give him my humblest and most devoted greetings.'

If Ram Maharaj did not appear according to schedule, we were fairly certain that something was the matter with him, a cold or a slight touch of fever. Then we would go to see him at the little Ashram, perched precariously on the side of a steep slope, where he lit two or three other lamps. We would find him in the twelve-root square room, by the Ashram kitchen, which had been his sitting place ever since he had been scumong mountains years ago to recover from tuberculosis. In this room were all his worknanda

sessions—a wooden cot, a table one foot high, a single chair (for the use of visitors), a stand for dishes and such an article of luxury as a thermos-flask, one or two small tin trunks and inside a padlocked wall-cupboard his stores and the old biscuit-tin in which he kept his stamps and cash. On different walls hung a few pictures of the Indian saints he loved, and opposite his bed a large calendar. His surplus garments were folded over a rope stretched across a corner of the room. At one end of the mantel-piece, above a fireplace which was never lighted, stood an old lantern. It had served him for more than a quarter of a century, and the original chimney was still unbroken. After putting the lantern on 'half-pension', as he said, he had at last relegated it to 'full-pension.' There it stood in shabby dignity, enjoying its well-earned rest.

On one well-remembered afternoon, it was not illness which prevented Ram Maharaj from taking his usual walk and putting in his punctual appearance at our house. He arrived fully one hour late, and he came solemnly bearing in front of him a piece of stiff cardboard, upon which a jig-saw puzzle was correctly assembled. 'You see,' he said in a tired voice, 'it does not take beautiful dancers from Indra's Heaven to distract one from thinking about the Lord. This puzzle has upset my whole day. Kindly do not give me any more jig-saw puzzles!' We laughed heartily at the outcome of my aunt's long-range attempt from New York to supply Ram Maharaj with a mild form of amusement. I had often written about him, and the puzzle had arrived unexpectedly a week before, with a letter expressing the hope that it might afford a pleasant relaxation for Ram Maharaj when he was not meditating. He had looked incredulously at all the little bits of wood jumbled together, quite certain that neither he nor anyone else could make any picture out of them. Now, behold, he had accomplished the impossible—but at the cost of a totally disrupted day, not to be repeated.

With the passing of time, Ram Maharaj

became an integral part of our lives, and we took him for granted almost as we took the mountains and the recurring seasons for granted. Slowly I came to realize that he never gave out what he had to give by formal teaching or instruction. He was not an 'intellectual', nor a scholar, and his education was rudimentary. He taught by simple stories which sprang into his mind in connection with some ordinary topics of conversation, by some unforgettable sentence revealing a profound truth, or most of all, by simply being himself. His teaching was as unconscious as the fragrance of a rose or lotus. Yet because his Ram was a complete and adequate explanation of everything, he had an all-comprehensive answer for every problem or question, no matter how complex. Nothing ever surprised him, and he was at ease in all circumstances, and among all kinds of people.

When human plans went awry, that was the precise moment, according to Ram Maharaj, to open one's eyes and see the Lord's Plan working. 'Remember the *Jacardandas*', he would tell us with a chuckle. The phrase soon became a synonym in our household for cheerful resignation to the inevitable, if nothing higher. The sight of my first *Jacaranda* tree, with masses of vivid deep blue flowers set off against a pale blue May sky, literally took my breath away. I could not rest until we had ordered two from a nursery. When they came, we selected the stronger of the two and carefully supervised the planting in a well-dug hole at the end of the front lawn. Then we handed the second tree over to the gardener and told him to plant it anywhere he thought best out near the back gate. In the course of a few years, the *Jacaranda* by the back gate which we could not even see from the house—though it was in full view of everybody walking along the road—burst into an incredible glory of violet-blue. As for the tree which was to have been our private possession of beauty, it has never yet produced more than one or two insignificant sprigs.

As long as one has desires, so he believed,

one must go on living, or be born again, since desires inevitably bind one to life. We were to be away on one occasion for three days only. Since he did not come to see us, we went over to say good-bye to him. It worried us to find him in bed with fever, but we were more worried when he said, 'You may not find me here when you come back.' His reason was, 'The Lord is wiping away all my desires.' He could think of three recently removed. All his life he had found the sharpening of a pencil rather troublesome and had wished there were some means of avoiding it. Had I not, only the other day, handed him the broken half of a Woolworth pencil made of solid lead coated with red paint and requiring no sharpening? Then, I had also given him a small barrel lock with combination numbers (again from Woolworth's, costing five cents!). He had seen a similar lock as a boy, and for a long time had cherished a secret ambition to own one. Finally, he had wished to visit his birth-place once more before he died, and last winter this visit to Calcutta had been accomplished. Since he could think of no other wishes, perhaps his time had now come. Fortunately, when we returned, the fever had gone, and we heard no further reference to Ram Maharaj's impending departure.

Rather foolishly, I once imagined I had caught him wishing and planning something on his own initiative. My husband happened to be in Delhi at the moment. Mentioning that he himself had never yet been to Delhi, though he had seen both Calcutta and Bombay, Ram Maharaj speculated on the possibility that now, while my husband was there, Ram might like him to visit Delhi. I passed on his remark, and by return mail came an invitation from my husband for Ram Maharaj to come down to Delhi with our nephew, just on the point of leaving.

'You see,' said Ram Maharaj, 'Ram does want me to go to Delhi!'

'But don't you think it is you who really want to go there?' I could not help asking.

'Of course,' he replied with perfect equanimity.

'How will Ram take me there, unless he first gives me the desire to go?'

When World War II came along, he found no difficulty in fitting it into the Divine Plan as understood by him. Not so, the rest of us.

'If only somebody would kill Hitler and Mussolini, the war would end tomorrow!' I burst forth one day.

'Oh,' said Ram Maharaj, 'you think that would solve everything? Don't you know the Lord, if He likes, can pull a worse Hitler out of one pocket and a worse Mussolini out of the other?' According to him, the Lord was using Hitler to bring home to humanity the bitter lessons of greed, violence, and lust of power. At the same time, no one must ever expect wars to be done away with. There must always be the rich man, the thief to steal his possessions, the policeman to catch him, the lawyer to defend him, the judge to try him, the jailer to keep watch over him. How else would the Play go on?

Before the war, we had gone abroad for a year and incidentally had attended an international physiological congress in Russia. From Moscow, my husband wrote to Ram Maharaj: 'You would like many things the Russians are doing, especially their care of children and poor people, but one thing you would not like. They do not believe in God.'

'Tell your Russian friends,' Ram Maharaj wrote back, 'there is nothing new in the way they feel. From the beginning of time the Lord has always created people who do not believe in Him.'

He was never impatient, as the rest of us so often are. When we first went to live in our remote Himalayan town, it was Ram Maharaj who actually found us our house—a stone bungalow of six rooms with separate kitchen and servants' quarters, an acre of ground and a view stretching fifty miles to the snow-covered peaks. Believe it or not, the monthly rent was only ten dollars. This was because the house had long been vacant on account of the local people's insistence that

it was haunted by a horse-ghost with the unpleasant habit of galloping over the roof-slates by night! Many repairs were necessary, and it was some time before we were ready for the house-warming. This, we decided, should take the form of feeding the poor, including our own servants and all those who had worked long and hard to make things comfortable for us.

I had not been long in India at the time, but I knew very well that a mixed party of Hindus would be a complicated affair, and I scrupulously left arrangements to others. The cook was to act as host and to serve the food. On the day of the feast I watched from the garden as our guests sat down in two long rows on the front veranda, before each a round shining brass tray. Suddenly I noticed the 'untouchable' sweeper, lowliest of household servants in India, sitting quite apart at the far end of the veranda, half hidden by a pillar. In front of him, as if he were a dog, was nothing but a piece of torn newspaper. Perhaps the brass trays had run out. Perhaps nobody thought it mattered. My husband, as shocked as I, went off to bring one of our own table plates for the sweeper, and I fled round a corner to shed uncontrollable tears. There I almost bumped into Ram Maharaj on his way to join us. 'Who has wounded you?' he asked tenderly, at sight of my tears. 'India's caste system,' I told him. He remained silent for a moment. 'Things are changing,' he then said, 'what was good yesterday is not always good today. But reforms cannot come all at once. Forty years from now there will be no more untouchability.'

It is just over fifteen years since he made that prophecy. But the *Bill of Rights* to be included in the new Constitution of free India has already proclaimed that all citizens will be considered equal in the eyes of law. Within a few weeks untouchability will have been officially and legally abolished in India.

Though strenuous philanthropic work is carried on in many of the Ramakrishna Centres in India, the Ashram in our hills was

intended primarily as a place of rest and meditation. The monks did no special or regular work, and they have either to beg their food or live on such charitable gifts as friends or relatives choose to give them. To Ram Maharaj, who received his support from an elder brother, a retired lawyer—almost a saint in his own right—waste of food or money was almost a crime. Besides, all should take the best possible care of what the Lord has bestowed upon them in trust. The economies he had practised in consequence throughout his whole life, were proverbial. They dated way back to the time just after he had entered the Order, when he had been placed in charge of buying supplies for the monastic headquarters in Bengal. He had come back from the bazar one day with leaf-plates of a very inferior quality. Asked why he had brought such a thirdrate article, he replied simply, 'because no leaf-plates of fourth quality were available.'

He wore old darned socks and a faded coat he himself had turned. His umbrella, as antique as his lantern, had been many times recovered, on the last occasion during the war, when black cloth was difficult to obtain. So Ram Maharaj had it recovered in bright blue. The material was strong and water-repellant, and what more was needed? Perhaps the limit was reached on the day he entered our living room and announced abruptly, 'I have lost my needle.' 'What sort of needle was it?' I enquired, ready to offer him another. 'It isn't that,' he said, 'I have other needles. It is that particular needle. I have had it for seventeen years, and I feel that I have lost a friend.'

There was another day I remember, on which we happened to be discussing budgets. I asked him casually how much it cost him to live. 'Twelve rupees a month,' he replied. Before I could even think 'four dollars'—prices had not then risen three or four hundred per cent, as now—he added: 'Of course that is with second class rice. First class rice would cost only a few annas extra.'



But why should one always demand first class things unless one can truthfully say, "I am a first class person".

Our own carelessness about a bewildering number of possessions at first troubled him a great deal. In the crucible into which all his perplexities were poured, this one, too, gradually melted away. 'The Lord wants them to be like that', he concluded, and never again pressed us to keep accounts or to number or list our things.

Through secret intimacy of prayer and meditation and constant remembering, it seemed to us that Ram Maharaj had drawn very close to the Lord, and that he often spoke 'as one with authority'. A Christian missionary with other ideas called at the Ashram one day and left a little tract on the life of Jesus Christ. He said he would return a week later to discuss it. When he did so, he was surprised and pleased to find that Ram Maharaj had not only read the book but had unqualified praise for it. He was encouraged to inquire earnestly whether Ram Maharaj would not consider becoming a Christian.

'You think the Lord wants everybody to become a Christian?' asked Ram Maharaj.

'Surely. That would please Him very much.'

'No,' said Ram Maharaj shortly. 'The Lord doesn't want. *You* want. If the Lord wants, in one wink of His eye we all must be Christians. His devotees approach Him by many paths, and all are good in His sight.'

Perhaps his visitor would have been a little consoled had he known that Ram Maharaj, like other members of the Order, observed Christmas Eve each year by a special ceremony. He read, or had read to him, the Nativity Story of one of the world's great *Avatars*, followed by reading of the Sermon on the Mount. And in the shrine-room of the Ashram, a plaster Madonna received a garland of flower—just as Hindu images in the same room were garlanded on ordinary days of the year.

Speaking of flowers naturally reminds me

of the garden, and of how Ram Maharaj's interest in it grew, in a very human way, in spite of himself. At first he quietly watched our struggle to bring order and beauty out of chaos. Paths were dug, beds made. We spent hours poring over seed catalogues, and we begged cuttings and roots and bulbs from all our friends. The garden prospered, but every year in April and May even the bath water, carefully saved, was not enough to prevent some things from dying, and in the ground lived a detestable species of fat white worm, which deliberately set out to destroy our best roses and irises.

'I enjoy Ram's garden,' was all that Ram Maharaj had to say. 'It means no trouble to me, and I do not have to worry about water. Ram has no favourites in His garden. When He gets tired of one flower, He makes others to please Himself. He also makes the bright leaves of the soap-berry tree close to my room.'

Nevertheless, as years went by, could it be that Ram Maharaj was actually taking more interest in our garden than in Ram's? He memorized the names of many strange flowers. He listed varieties and colours and noted down the seasons of flowering. He also brought wild violets gathered on his morning walks to compare with our cultivated ones. Once when we were going down to the plains in November, he was greatly worried lest some young plants brought up the year before might not survive their first mountain winter. After seeing us off at our blue gate, he himself went about the garden, as he afterwards wrote to us, tying newspapers around the trees and shrubs. To my husband's comment 'Don't you think your 'daughter-in-law' ought to be ashamed to give you so much trouble over her garden?' He merely replied, 'We all have so much work to do before this life is finished. It is better to work for love than money.'

In that letter, too, he said something else we shall not forget. With the departure of summer visitors, our end of the ridge always

becomes quite solitary and deserted. 'You will be lonely when we have gone,' we said to Ram Maharaj. 'No,' he answered, 'I am used to loneliness. I just shake myself a little, and then I am all right.' But in his first letter he confessed, 'You were right. The Lord has washed away my pride. I do miss you.'

And now, it is we who miss him!

In October, when the leaves began to fall and sharp wind once again swept from over the snow ranges, Ram Maharaj could no longer take his customary walks. His heart was weak, and his face had grown thin and shadowy. He broke off in the middle of a sentence, forgetting what he had wanted to say. Though he wrapped himself in many shawls and blankets, felt cold all the time. His brother arrived, and a young monk was

especially sent to look after him, but each day he grew weaker. At last everybody agreed that Ram Maharaj must go down to the warmer climate of Benares, where there is a big Ramakrishna Centre and a good hospital run by the monks. My husband lifted him in his arms as if he had been a baby and gently placed him on the blankets and quilts spread on the seat of the bus, so that he might be as comfortable as possible on the long journey of eighty-two miles to the railway station at the foot of the mountains.

'If Ram wishes, I will return in March,' he said.

But Ram wished otherwise. After a few weeks, word came that he had quietly given up his old frail body, a worn-out garment of no more use to him.

## THE MARCH OF HISTORY (III)

By P. S. NAIDU

*(Continued from the September issue)*

### XII. RESUME

We have seen how at the present moment contradictory views, pessimistic and optimistic—are being held in regard to the future of mankind. Just now pessimism appears to have a seductive influence over the minds of thoughtful men and women. And the pressing need of the hour, therefore, is a correct and cheering orientation of thought in the confused mass of the facts of world history. Is it possible to secure that orientation in the light of the logical determinism and dialecticism of Hegel, or of the biological evolutionisms of Darwin, Spencer, and Lloyd Morgan? No, it is not. We have seen how and why the existing philosophies of history fail us at a time of great need. Our hope, then, lies in the possibilities hidden in the unexplored

psycho-philosophical regions of historical interpretation. And into this untrodden region I propose to take you in the next lecture and show there the one increasing purpose running through the ages, conferring meaning, point, and purpose on the dangerous and apparently pointless life that we seem to be leading today.

### XIII. OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The critical times in which we are living today inspire us alternately with hope and dread, with expectation of a rosy dawn and fear of an impending gloom and darkness. This uncertainty of outlook is due, in a large measure, to the utter lack of competent leadership among men, and to the utter lack of spiritual faith in those who happen to be at

the helm of world affairs. The supreme dread of every one of us who cares for the good of our nation, and of the human race as a whole is, that these leaders without spiritual vision may wreck the future of the human race by their godlessness and agnosticism. With pain and fear, we see that a band of men and women who might and should be the wisest guides of human progress are alienated for ever from the kind of faith which sufficed for all rational beings in an earlier age. No one has presented to them, and they cannot obtain for themselves, any ground of conviction as firm and clear as that which sufficed for our forefathers in their day. The moral dangers of such lack of faith are fearful in the extreme. It is here that the philosopher should step in and by a well-defined philosophy of history provide these leaders with the anchorage which they sorely need. He should inspire faith in man's high destinies and make of our leaders so many agents cooperating with God in His endeavour to raise humanity to the level of divinity. Philosophers having failed in the past, we have now to set out on the task of tracing the maze-like path of history from an entirely fresh starting-point. Our contention is that thinkers have failed to find the correct clue to the solution of the mystery of the historic process, because they totally neglected the psychological forces guiding man's progress. We shall not repeat that blunder; we shall make the psychology of individual development the ground-plan for building up our philosophy of history.

Towards the end of the first lecture (sections I to XI) I indicated how man progresses from elemental impulses to concrete sentiments, and from concrete to abstract sentiments, and from these again to a higher stage wherein the various sentiments are arranged in a hierarchical order. As with the individual, so with the nation or race. Nations too start from the level of instinctual impulses and emotions and rise to the higher level of sentiments. Many have risen up to the level of concrete sentiments, but have stayed there per-

manently or have regressed to the primitive level again; only a few have got beyond to the plane of abstract sentiments. Now, these sentiments often come into conflict with one another, and until this conflict is resolved there will be no peace. Practically no nation has got beyond the stage of conflict. But sooner or later the plane of peace will have to be reached by all. In the meantime let me raise a very important question. What is the supreme sentiment in terms of which the various concrete and abstract sentiments have to be arranged in a descending order? What is that master-sentiment which presides over all others and confers meaning and value on them? These questions were faced squarely and answered with penetrating insight only by one psychologist, the late William McDougall, the founder and leader of the Hormic School. This gifted student of human nature demonstrated that for the Western peoples, and for those who have borrowed Western modes of life and thought, self-regard is the undisputed sovereign, presiding over and guiding the destinies of the other sentiments in the European scale of values. And McDougall significantly points out that even the moral sentiments pale into insignificance as against this master-sentiment of self-regard. This observation is profoundly true of the culture of Western peoples. One has only to turn over the pages of European history to feel convinced of the supreme power which self-regard wields over the nations of the West. I have only to direct your attention to the field of power politics in the West to make you see how each nation is jockeying for the front place in order to maintain its own national self-regard. Yet, what is this self-regard worth after all? Well, I feel that an answer to the question is to be found in the implications of that great tragic piece of literature depicting Western life in its essence, Goethe's *Faust*. Notice carefully the sinister person standing by the side of Faust. He is the very embodiment of self-regard. Frivolous, cynical, materialistic and above all clever; the proud

possessor of pure, cold, barren intelligence, Mephistopheles is the most complete and fullest representative of Western self-regard. This self-regard is the destructive daemon in modern man fostering intellectualism, sensualism, materialism, and nihilism in his mind. The acute scholar Faust has to confess, in his sober moments, that he has been sadly deceived by this self-regarding intellect engendered by godless realism. He keenly longs for something he knows not what—and that something was the proud possession of the mediaeval man. The mediaeval man, whose idea of the world was narrow and in many ways distorted, was however inspired by divine vision. For him the world was to be grasped by the heart as well as by the head; but since the close of the Middle ages this vision has been lost. The West has failed to lay hold of and enlarge the vision of divinity it once had. Instead, its feet have been set on the path of self-regard leading to self-destruction. Now, then, if self-regard is unfit to reign as the sovereign and is to be dethroned, what other sentiment should we enthrone in its place? It is here that the Asiatic people in general and our nation, in particular, which have been reviled in uncultured language by Hegel, come in to teach the world a most valuable lesson. The only sentiment fit to rule as a master-sentiment over the minds of human beings is the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment. It is that divine sentiment *par excellence* which is the crown and culmination of the historic process, and which will finally gather up the peoples of the world into the bosom of God. While the self-regarding sentiment preserves the individuality of the lower-sentiments and thus sows the seeds of strife and conflict, of discord and disunity, Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment dissolves all the lower psychological stages and prepares the way for the final unity of mankind in the Godhead. All nations must begin their career in their infancy at the level of primitive impulses and pass through, in their pre-adolescent stage, the level of concrete senti-

ments, and at the period of adolescence they must reach the higher stage of abstract sentiments and face the conflict between them. Now they stand at the parting of ways. If they choose the self-regarding sentiment as their goal, then, in spite of some temporary worldly progress, they will have a sorry downfall in the end, and their civilization will be wiped out: if, on the other hand, they choose Para-Brahman-regard, as conceived by the highest type of Vedanta, then in spite of what may strike the worldly-minded as stagnation, they will make steady progress towards that supreme goal of finding 'Him who, having made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, if haply they might feel after and find Him.'

The process, then, of world history may be summed up thus: Each human group or tribe in remote pre-historic times commenced its upward career by organizing its group-life round some primitive instinctual impulse. There was little cooperation outside the group, but inside, the life lived on the crude instinctual plane bound the individuals together. And if we read aright the expressions of primitive culture we may discover even at this barbaric stage some groping after the Para-Brahman, however crude, superstitious, and dread-inspiring it might be. Then at the dawn of history we find racial groups organizing their common life round concrete sentiments, and as we reach the period conventionally known as the Ancient Period in history, we find these sentiments growing richer, fuller, more expansive and more numerous. This stage has persisted right down to our times. At this psychological level each advanced nation or group attains a mature stage of culture and tries to impose its sentiment-patterns on other groups not so highly advanced. It is rather disappointing to notice here that the Divine vision, the urge to attain Para-Brahman, which is dimly visible in the pre-historic stages, is not

developed, but on the other hand is allowed to flicker out and perish in the life of many nations. These groups seem to be revelling in their newly discovered strength and success in worldly matters assured by the vigorous functioning of their concrete sentiment-patterns. But among the racial units at this level some may be found looking steadily up, and not down for their goal. As against this striving to rise higher, there is also a falling off to the lower level in the case of some nations. This regression to the lowest level of culture may finally end in the complete annihilation of civilization. Among the groups striving to rise higher, only those succeed in reaching the level of abstract sentiments who have become fully inspired by the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment. Meanwhile, there occurs the struggle, which orthodox history glorifies, between nations on the concrete sentiment level, and between these and others on the higher abstract sentiment level. Wars, oppressions, colonizations, and forcible cultural subjugations occur in the struggle for world domination. In this struggle there is, of course, the ever-shifting groupings and re-groupings of nations for mutual benefit, and it may appear that there is cooperation, mutual understanding, and progress towards unity in such negative combinations. But these appearances are deceptive, for these combinations against a common enemy are soon found to disintegrate leading to fierce separative individualisms in the case of the self-regarding nations. In the midst of all this tribulation and turmoil that nation which has hitched its wagon to the star of Para-Brahman-regard steadily progresses, though it may lie inactive for a while like a mighty giant in deep sleep. It is this nation that will finally gather up the whole world within its fold and lead on the entire human race to its Divine Creator. It will conserve the elements of value in the concrete and abstract sentiments which each nation has striven to organize, and liquidate the anti-spiritual elements in them and finally achieve

that cultural synthesis which the Divine Will has planned for mankind. Such is the process which a correct and penetrating reading of world history reveals to us.

Now, there are certain peculiar features of this cultural process of development in world history that merit our attention at this stage. The first notable peculiarity of the subjective psychological process which we have been discussing is its irrepressible urge to express itself in some outward form. Poetry and fiction; dance and drama; music and painting; sculpture and architecture; folklore and mythology; commercial, social, and governmental institutions; science and philosophy—these are some of the expressions of the cultures of human groups. And so too are the wars and conquests, acts of deceit euphemistically called diplomacy and statesmanship, and others of their type which alone, according to orthodox history, have a claim to be recorded in the pages of human history. It is through a correct psychological analysis of these cultural products that we may hope to perceive the one increasing purpose running through the temporal process. It is through a careful study of these cultural expressions that we may understand how much each nation has contributed to the final unity and solidarity of the human race as a whole.

A second notable feature of this subjective cultural process, operating in the individual and the race as well, is the sympathetic sharing of emotional experiences. Our minds are made of the same stuff. It is no wonder that among like-minded men and women who have formed similar scales of sentiment-values, there should operate powerfully that sympathetic induction of emotions and sentiments leading to a fuller and richer life. Mutual sympathy has served to uplift and ennoble the lives of individuals who would otherwise have stagnated at a lower cultural level. In the case of nations and groups, too, we find that through the sympathetic induction of emotions, sentiments, and scales of senti-

ment-values, one nation has helped another to rise to a higher level. But the danger lurking here of one nation debasing another should not be overlooked. Sympathetic induction, then, is a powerful force for good as well as for evil, and it has left its indelible marks on the pages of human history.

Armed with this psycho-philosophical formula for the interpretation of the cultural history of mankind, let us see how much each nation has contributed towards the creation of that perfect unity which 'nature has so long foreshadowed and in which there will be a complete communion of its members, unobstructed by egoism or hatred, by harshness or arrogance, or the wolfish lust for blood.' The endeavour of mankind to reach this goal has invariably been hindered by the inordinate strength of the self-regarding sentiment, which is a segregating force keeping nations apart and sowing seeds of mistrust, suspicion, and hatred in their minds. What is urgently needed is a supreme unifying principle able to dominate and transform this 'fundamental disharmony' making for disunity among human beings. Such a principle is to be found not in that which belongs to history and is, therefore, phenomenal, but in that which transcends it, namely, in the spiritual element in human nature. And that principle is none other than the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment whose nature and importance in the evolution of the human race has already been stressed by us.

#### XIV. PRIMITIVE MAN AND HIS CULTURE

Let us now set our hand to the main task. In estimating the contribution made to cultural unity by pre-historic tribes and groups as well as by historic peoples and nations, we have perforce to commence with an estimate of the life of primitive man. This life has been graphically described for us by scholars who have delved into the abyss of pre-history. The cave man's fierce passions, his hunting expeditions, his precarious existence in an

unfriendly environment, and above all his awe-inspiring rites and dreaded magic ceremonies have been painted in garish colours by many a field anthropologist of note. It should, however, be remembered that the correct scientific study of pre-historic archaeology scarcely goes back further than 1840. And it is only during the last two or three decades that fresh light has been thrown on the mysterious culture of primitive man. I am referring in particular to the astounding subterranean explorations conducted by Norbert Casteret in southern France and northern Spain. The discoveries made by this daring underground explorer give the lie direct to the widespread notion that cave men drew or moulded figures of animals for pastime or for the mere pleasure of drawing and moulding. These figures have an occult significance. They are meant to function as spells, destructive or protective, for warding off danger to the tribe, or for maintaining and increasing the fecundity of the animals which serve as food. In the higher stages these figures form part of an elaborate mystic rite for propitiating the tutelary deities of the tribe. *Fear and food-seeking* are the two elementary propensities which ruled over the lives of these pre-historic men. Their groups were organized at the lowest instinctual level. Anxiety for the morrow in regard to food and anxiety for personal safety and security—these are the motive forces in the life of the cave man. It is significant that these crude motives are just the ruling forces in the minds of the civilized races when the severities of a world war or great natural catastrophes force them back to a primitive level of helplessness and despair.

A noble band of field workers in anthropology have toiled hard to bring to light the hidden springs of primitive life. But the palm of victory in the struggle to wring out of the cultural products unearched by these workers their secret should go to Freud and Jung and their collaborators. Freud, in particular, has thrown a flood of brilliant light on the hidden psychological springs of primitive

man's group-activities. In his well-known work, *Totem and Taboo*, Freud draws a significant distinction between primitive magic and primitive sorcery. With the aid of the former the savage attempted to reach out into the physical and the social environment he lived in, while with the aid of the latter he sought to reach up to the level of the beings of the spirit. Magic, of course, occupies the major part of the primitive man's life. It is here that we see the play of those powerful instinctual impulses which function at the lowest level of our cultural evolution. But in the midst of it all there is that vague longing to reach out to that which is beckoning mankind from on high. It is a well-known fact that the contact of the noble savage with *Modern Civilization* has resulted in his undoing and degradation. The reason is not far to seek. The West is hidebound in its thick covering of concrete sentiments. It has not enough spiritual vitality to break through this crust. And when its material civilization acts upon the mind of the savage it serves but to over-emphasize and overdevelop the materialistic at the cost of the spiritualistic elements in primitive culture. We need not pursue this subject of primitive culture far, because it is clear that in the organization of his group-life primitive man is only attempting a monotonous repetition of the same theme. At one time and place it is the fear impulse that rules, at another it is the food, at another still it is acquisitiveness, and at a fourth it is the lust for blood. Everywhere and at all times it is some one or two or three of the fundamental impulses that serve as centres of organization, and in their midst is dimly discernible, as I have already pointed out, that dynamic force which has immense potentialities for progress. Primitive man's culture, therefore, moves on the really primitive level of instinctual impulses and emotions, and its contribution to the sum total of human culture is more or less negative. It is important in that it stresses the need for the annihilation of those brutal elements in human nature which bind man down to this

earth, and in so binding make each man the bitter enemy of his brother man.

## XV. GREECE AND MATERIAL BEAUTY

From the primitive savage to the Greeks and the Romans it is a long hop from the historical point of view. But, psychologically speaking, it is a very short step indeed from the instinctual level of the savage to the concrete sentiment level of the Greek and Roman cultures. The Greek is but the noble savage with his primitive impulses rendered non-repellent by the fabric of external beauty with which he has draped them. If we have to choose one word for expressing the soul of Greek culture our choice will readily fall on Beauty. The ancient Greek was impelled powerfully to perceive and cultivate beauty in the human body, beauty in external nature and, above all, beauty in art; and many will be inclined to add beauty in the inner organization of the human mind. This last feature, however, is of doubtful significance. Beauty, harmony, balance, proportion, and equipoise, then, are the outstanding characteristics of Greek culture. On the psychological side we find that the Greek mind is engaged in forging concrete sentiments out of the raw impulses of Gregariousness, Constructivity, Acquisitiveness, Curiosity and Appeal. The Greek city-state is the outcome of gregariousness, the Greek colonies of acquisitiveness, Greek science and philosophy of primitive curiosity, and Greek art of a combination of all these with primitive sympathetic appeal. In Greek art nature is adapted to purposes of utility and ornament. The cultivation of the human body through games and sports has no higher aim than that of physical strength and attraction. On the objective side, there is a desperate struggle in Greek art to rise from the sensuous to the spiritual level; but the struggle ends in failure because the proper motive-force is not there. The Greek divinities, like the cultured Greek citizens, revel in concrete sentiments which bind them down to this earth. They are attractive because they are

so human in all their frailties, faults, and failings. But they are in no sense competent to raise man to the higher spiritual levels.

What then, it may be asked, of Greek democracy in which many have seen the elements of freedom and spirituality? The term democracy as applied to Greek constitutions is a misnomer. It is Montesquieu who pointed out that higher morality in the form of subjective conviction and intention does not manifest itself in Greek democracy. Morality here is of the customary type. Hegel asserts that political Greece holds the middle ground of Beauty and has not attained to the higher standpoint of Truth. From our psycho-philosophical point of view Greece occupies the lower rung of concrete sentiments in the ladder of cultural evolution and has not climbed up to the higher level of abstract sentiments. The consideration of the state in the abstract was alien to Greek nature. What appealed to the Greeks was their country in its living, real, concrete aspect; this actual Athens, this Sparta, these temples, these altars, this form of social life, this union of fellow-citizens, these manners and customs—in fact this of everything which comes out of the concrete and serves to satisfy the concrete sentiments ruling over the minds of the men and women of Ancient Greece. Historians are aware of the extraordinary hold which hero-worship had over the minds of the ordinary Greek citizens. This extreme submissiveness of human individuals, this tendency to raise human beings to the level of demi-gods, is antagonistic to the growth of free democracy in which every one is presumed to exercise unfettered judgment of his own. This anti-democratic element taken along with the existence of slavery and of the Greek oracle demonstrates that the group-mind of the ancient Greeks never rose above the concrete level. In fact there was a tendency for the noble savage to sink down to the level of the barbaric savage. It is not without significance that the Freudian complexes which are the prime movers in debasing man to the level of

the beast are named after, and have their most striking illustrations in, the famous Greek heroes and heroines. Is there, then, one may ask, no evidence at all of any attempt on the part of the Greeks to rise above the mere concrete level? I am afraid there is none. If there be any, we should expect to find it in the great philosophic systems of Plato and Aristotle. It is highly disappointing to find that the grand idealisms of Plato and Aristotle are at bottom nothing but realisms of the concrete sentiment variety. Consider for instance the doubt that still lingers over the exact nature of the supreme idea that presides over the pyramidal hierarchy of Platonic ideas. Is it God or the Good? One can never tell. Is it spiritual idealism or merely ethical realism that is at the foundation of Platonic metaphysics? And in the same manner we may wonder whether the concept of Pure or matterless form of Aristotle is not inspired by motives tainted with earthly considerations? I often wonder whether Plato and Aristotle were compromising with public opinion against the dictates of their better nature? Or was it that they were frightened by the fate that overtook Socrates? Anyway, they seem to be the true exponents of what was best and highest in the culture of their age, and that was no better than the nobler types of concrete sentiments in our scale of values.

## XVI. ROME AND MATERIAL ORGANIZATION

From the noble savage with his naked body of crude impulses clothed in garments of beauty spun out of concrete sentiments to the nobler savage who doffed this drapery and covered himself with the scintillating but gossamer-like fabric of the intellect, it is like walking from one apartment to another in the same flat. We are still in the region of concrete sentiments, though Roman civilization presents to us the illusory appearance of an ascent to a higher level. As material beauty is the highest expression of Greek culture, so material organization, law and order are the



most exalted expressions of Roman culture. Rome attempted to destroy all the concrete life of individuals and states, the greatest legacy of Greece, and impose on its citizens an abstract legal right, the outcome of its genius for juristic creation. Hegel characterizes the Roman spirit which created positive law as 'constrained, non-spiritual and unfeeling intelligence.' He further points out that Roman consciousness 'has given itself no spiritual objectivity—has not elevated itself to the theoretical contemplation of the eternally divine.' Roman religion is, therefore, entirely prosaic. It is moved by narrow aspirations, expediency, and profit. The divinities peculiar to the Roman cult are entirely commonplace. They are objectified conditions of the mind, and of human sensations, or the embodiments of the useful arts. The most attractive elements in Roman religion are the festivals. In these as in everything else we find that the group-mind is

engaged in organizing the fundamental emotions and impulses round human and divine personages and natural objects to generate only concrete sentiments. Witness the way in which the Romans worshipped Pax and Vacuna, and dedicated altars to Hunger and Mildew. The Roman, like the Greek, failed to lift himself above the concrete sentiment level.

The deadening influence of Greece and Rome has resisted the liberalizing spirit of Christ and has kept all but the democratic countries in Europe at its own concrete level. It is no matter for wonder that scholars love to trace all that is permanent in European civilization to Greece and Rome, but it is not seen readily by these enthusiasts that this proud ancestry is also the sole cause for the downfall with which civilization is being threatened at the present moment.

(To be continued)

## THE LIFE OF TULSIDAS (I)

By MRS C. K. HANDOO

Tulsidas, who sang his *Ramayana* in the seventeenth century, needs no introduction to the Indian public. Controversies are baffling to the layman and present-day scholars are not in agreement in regard to the construction of his life, but he comes surprisingly close to those who lay aside their critical intellect and approach him through his books and writings. Amongst the lovers of Ram he is indeed a king, and one of the best amongst those who ever aspired to serve Him. We deplore the scanty references to his personal life in his works but are happy to find that he has laid bare his saintly sensitive heart to us as no biographer or historian could have done. To those who read his *Ramcharitmanas* with the love and reverence that it deserves he proves

himself to be a valuable friend, philosopher, and guide. His deep understanding of the human heart endears him to the young and the old, and he becomes almost a living presence, removing many a cobweb of doubts and ignorance from the dark corners of our minds and ever encouraging us onward in our feeble search for the Divine. His own heart is so full of Ram 'on Whom he depends, Who is his source of strength and his one and only hope and faith'—*ek bharoso ek bal, ek ās visvās*.—*Dohavali*, 277—that he would care not to be known by the cold and calculating measure of dates and sequence of events in his outward life, but through his beloved master Ram. He himself says,

*Nāto nāte Rām ke, Rām saneha sanehu,*

*Tulasi māngat jori kar, janam janam  
Siva dehu.*

'May I claim relationship through Ram,  
may I love through love of Ram.

Life after life, O Siva, with folded hands  
Tulsi asks this boon of thee.'

*Dohanali, 89*

Indians in the past have at all times been so overwhelmed by thoughts of the Infinite, and consciously and deliberately they have been so intent on breaking the bonds of the ego which imprisoned their own souls, that they have been singularly reticent about themselves and have never cared to narrate anecdotes or incidents about their own individual lives. Tulsidas in particular had vowed that his voice would never sing in praise of any human being; but in modern times we have developed a curiosity about and a value of human personality, and we wish greatly to reconstruct the lives of our great ones, specially the saints whose blessed feet have sanctified the very dust of this land and have captured the heart and imagination of the Indian people. Besides, we know fully well that in spite of the sophistication of our age and the distractions of the scientific inventions which it brings to us, humanity will ever hanker for that spark of Divine fire that lies hidden in every human heart. The study of the lives of saints also repays us a hundred-fold, for not only is it a means to a higher way of living and thinking, but it is also an end in itself.

*Tulasi Rāmahu te adhik Rām bhakt jiya jān*

'Know the devotee of Ram to be greater than  
Ram Himself'. *Dohavali, III*

This line, besides stating Tulsi's own opinion, is in perfect agreement with the tradition which identifies the devotee with God and looks upon him as a pure temple of Truth. 'His words are sweet as honey and in his silence he shines most resplendent, radiating the world with life-giving thoughts. To hear of him is a blessing and to think of him is peace.' ('The Life Supernal,' *The Journal of the Mahabodhi Society*, August 1938).

Knowing Tulsidas to be such a devotee of the Lord we consider it a privilege to write a short life-sketch from the material available to us. Though this sketch claims to be neither exhaustive nor final, it is a tribute to the holy feet of Tulsidas from one who owes much to him; if it can also help to kindle a spark of faith, understanding, or devotion in the heart of some lonely traveller on the path of spiritual life this labour of love will be more than repaid.

A detailed life of Tulsi called *Gosain Charitra*, which is now unfortunately lost, was written by Beni Madho Das, a constant companion of his *sadhu* life. An abridged edition of the same called *Māl Gosain Charitra* is, however, still available, and we have based this short article chiefly on this book. It is possible that Beni Madho Das, being a staunch disciple, friend, and admirer of Tulsi, exaggerated in some places. It is also not to be expected that he was a witness to all the incidents described by him, but we agree with the introductory life of Tulsi in the *Manas* number of the Hindi *Kalyān* 1939 that in the absence of any other data we should have no hesitation in accepting the broad outlines of this book. We must keep in mind also that Beni Madho Das was a contemporary of Tulsidas; he has supplied us with the dates of the main events in his life, and there is no contradiction in what he says to the few and far between references that the poet gave about himself in his own works.

Tulsidas was born in the village Rajapur in the Banda district of the United Provinces. His date of birth is stated by Beni Madho Das in the following verse:

*Pandrah sau chauran vishai, Kālindī ke tīr,  
Sāvan shuklā saptamī, Tulasi dhareu sarīr*

'In the Samvat year 1534 (1497 A.D.) on the banks of the Jamuna, on the 7th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Sravana Tulsi was born.'

Modern scholars are inclined to disagree with this view and put his date of birth about 35 years later, round about 1534 A.D. The

reason for this is chiefly that, according to Beni Madho Das, he lived to the ripe old age of 127 years, which sceptics now consider to be an improbability. Tulsi's father was a Brahmin named Atmaram and his mother's name was Hushi. *Ramcharitmanas* contains a reference to the mother's name in the following line :

*Rāmhi prīya pāvan Tulasi sī, Tulasidāsa  
hita hīya Hushi sī*

*Ram katha*... 'is dear to Ram as the pure Tulsi plant and has the welfare of Tulsidas at heart like (his mother) Hushi.'

Great were the rejoicings at the birth of a son. But when the alarming news was conveyed to the father that instead of crying in baby-like fashion the child had uttered the word Ram, that he looked like a grown-up boy of five, and was born with the full adult complement of thirty-two teeth, an anxious foreboding of evil filled his heart. The old villagers shook their heads in great doubt, astrologers and kinsmen were consulted, and all decided to wait and see if the baby lived for three days, after which they would make up their minds about his future. On the fourth day the mother took a turn for the worse, and fearing that in case she died the little one would be looked upon as bringing ill-luck to the family, she called her maid-servant Muniya, gave her all her jewellery and ornaments and begged her to take the child away to her village in Haripur and look after him as her own son. Muniya agreed and left quietly at dead of night with the precious little bundle in her arms. Knowing that the baby was in safe hands Hushi's motherly heart was comforted and she was able to breathe her last in peace early the next morning.

Because the baby had uttered the word Ram at birth he was given the name of Ram Bola. This name is confirmed by Tulsidas in the following line of the *Vinaya Patrika* where he says :

*Rām ko gulām nām Rām Bolā rākhyo Rām*

'I am the servant of Ram and was named Ram Bola by Him.'

Muniya brought Ram Bola safely to her village, gave the baby to her mother-in-law Chuniya, who acted as a foster-mother to Ram Bola for five years and five months. She then suddenly died of snake-bite. The villagers sent a message to Atmaram but he refused to take his son back, saying that he could not give shelter to such an unfortunate child, two of whose guardians had died already, and who seems to be fated to lose those who loved and protected him. Thus the shadow cast at birth on Ram Bola's life by the suspicion of his relatives and the death of his loving mother deepened into gloom while he was still a little toddler, lisping in sweet baby language and innocent of the misfortune that followed in his footsteps. Henceforth he wandered about like a destitute begging for food and receiving only harsh and unkind treatment from the world. This was probably the darkest period in the life of Ram Bola, and he refers to it again and again in his writings. His sorrowful words move our hearts, and we cannot help feeling that he was never able to efface the memory of the slights and insults he suffered at this tender and impressionable age. We will quote some of the relevant passages, even at the risk of repetition, to enable the sympathetic reader to get an idea of the suffering of this brilliant poet and saintly son of India, imposed by the cruel hands of society, which even to this day is utterly indifferent to the upbringing of its poor and orphaned young. Seeing the miserable condition of the children begging in the streets of this poor land one wonders how many talents have been nipped in the bud, how many deft and useful hands wasted in holding the beggars' bowl, and how many little hearts broken for want of human love and affection. Tulsi speaks not only for himself but for all those whose plight today is similar to what his was four centuries ago, similar to what his was four centuries ago.

He says—

*Mātu pitā jaga jāi tajjo, vidhi hun na likhi  
kachhu bhāla bhalāi.*

*Neecha nirādara bhājana kādar, kūkar-  
tukana lagi lalāi.*

'Father and mother, after giving birth to me in the world, cast me off, and even Brahma did not give me a good destiny. Thus, lowly and cowardly, spurned by all, I longed even for the piece of bread in the mouth of the dog.

*Kavitāvali*

*Pataka-peena kudārīda-deena malina  
dharen kathari karawa hai*

'Nurtured in sin and suffering humiliation through extreme poverty, my possessions were a dirty and patched quilt and an earthenware waterpot'

*Kavitāvali*

*Janani-janaka tajjo janami, karamabina  
vidhihu srijoyo avadero*

*Phirayo lalata binu nāma udara lāgi, dukhau  
dukhita mohi hero*

'Mother and father abandoned me at my birth, without the merits of good deeds in the past, the Creator also made my path tortuous; Without Ram I wandered about, greedy to fill my stomach and even Sorrow suffered to see my miserable condition.' *Vinaya Patrika*

*Dvāra dvāra deenata kahi, kādhi rada pari  
pāhu,*

*Hain dayālu, duni das disā, dukh-dosh-  
dalan-chhama kiyo na sambhashana  
kāhu.*

*Tanu janateu kutila kīta jyon, tajjo mātū-  
pitahu-kahe ko rosh, dosh kahi  
dhaun, mere hi abhāg mōson sakuchat  
chhui saba chhanhu*

'From door to door I went, baring my teeth (in an attempt to smile) and falling at the feet (of those from whom I begged) to express my poverty. There are kind people who are powerful enough to destroy the shortcomings and miseries of the world in all its directions, but none of them spoke to me.

Parents abandoned me as the snake who gives up the offspring born from its own body.

Why should I be angry and whom should

I blame? It is all my own misfortune, people even fear to contact my shadow.'

*Vinaya Patrika*

*Āsa bibasa khāsa dāsa hai neecha prabhuni  
janāyo.*

*Hā hā kari deenata kahi dvāra-dvāra  
bāra-bāra, pari na chara manha bāyo  
Asana basana binu bāvaro jahān-tahān  
uthi dhāyo,*

*Mahimā māna priya prānate taji kholi  
khalani āge, khinu-khinu peta khalāyo  
Nāth! hāth kuchu nahin lagyo, lālach  
lalachāyo*

*Sāneh kahaun nāth kaun so, jo na mohi  
lobh ladhu haun niralajj nachāyo*

'Though I was your personal servant, yet led by hope I offered my services to those of impure hearts, bewailing my lot, dwelling on my poverty, from door to door I wandered, but not even ashes were thrown at my open mouth.

Without food and clothing I ran hither and thither like a madman,

Giving up self-respect which is dearer than life.

I showed my empty stomach at all moments to the wicked ones.

O Lord! dragged on by avarice I received nothing.

I tell you truly there was no depth to which I did not sink unashamed, lured on by lowly greed.'

*Vinaya Patrika*

*Ghar ghar mānge tuk puni, bhupati puje  
pāy*

*Je Tulasi tab Rām binu, te ab Ram sahāy*

'He who begged for a piece (of bread) from house to house, his feet were later worshipped by kings. That Tulsi who was first without Ram, has now Ram for his helpmate.'

*Dohavali, 109*

From the above lines it would seem that Ram Bola remained in this miserable condition for some length of time, but Beni Madho Das says that after two years, at the age of seven, a *sadhu* called Narharidas or Narhari-ananda took him under his protection.

Narharidas himself was a disciple of the

great Ramananda, who lived in the fourteenth century, and gave an impetus to that branch of Vaishnava-Bhakti that worshipped the ideal of Ram. Ramananda was fifth in apostolic succession to Sri Ramanuja, the founder of the Vishishtadvaita philosophy. He preached in the language of the people and shook off the narrow fetters imposed by Sri Ramanuja and his followers. Tulsi was in every way a worthy successor of this liberal and large-hearted saint. Narharidas, we are told, received a command in a dream of divine origin that he was to look after this boy and was to instruct him in the life-history of Ram. So with the consent of the villagers he took Ram Bola with him to Ayodhya, where he performed his sacred thread ceremony, gave him the Ram-mantra, and started his education in right earnest. After ten months he left Ayodhya for Sukar Kheta—a place of pilgrimage on the banks of the Sarayu river in the district of Gonda. Here master and disciple lived in close association for five years, and it was in this place that Ram Bola first heard the fascinating story of his *Ishta Deva*, Ram, whose divinely human life he was destined to relate and interpret to the world in later life. The following lines of *Ramcharit-manas* seem to support this view :

*Main puni nija Guru san suni, kathā so  
Sukarkhet samujhi nāhin tasi bāla  
pana, tab ati raheun achet.*

'I heard this story from my Guru in Sukar Khet. Being a child and without understanding, I could not grasp it then.'

Incidentally he gives us the pre-requisites to a proper appreciation of an Incarnation of God in lines that follow the above verse :

*Shrotā vaktā gyānanidhi, kathā Ram kai  
goodha  
Kimi samujhaun main jiv jada, kalimala  
grasita vimudha*

'Teacher and taught shou' be the treasure-house of wisdom, for the story of Ram is deep. How shall I understand it, who am a deluded creature dulled by the impurities of Kaliyuga ?'

*Tadapi kahi guru bārahin bāra  
Samujhi pari kachu mati anusāra.*

'Still my Guru repeated it over and over again, and I grasped a little of it according to my understanding.'

The last line gives us some idea of the patience and perseverance that must have led Narharidas to take in hand the task of educating this little beggar boy picked up from the streets of an out-of-the-way village, during his *parivrajaka* wanderings. In exchanging the freedom of his monastic life for the self-imposed responsibility of bringing up Ram Bola we feel that he must also have had a deep insight into the mind of his little protégé, and an equally strong faith in human nature as well. Psychologically, it is also true that noble ideas and ideals are accepted and propagated through the impact of human personality. Therefore the Hindu scriptures say that 'being is greater than doing,' and only life can inspire another life. And so when we try to study the forces that moulded the life of Ram Bola, our heart goes out in loving thanks to the memory of that unknown saint, who without hope of any selfish gain, gave to us, out of his overflowing love of humanity, the gift of our dearly beloved Tulsi. And now we perhaps dimly understand why ardent homage has been paid to his holy feet, at the beginning of the *Ramcharitmanas*, in beautiful lines that apparently come from the heart of the poet. We shall follow him only in the opening of this passage—

*Bandau guru pada kanja, kripā sindhu  
nararupa hari*

*Jasu vachan ravikara nikara, mahā moha  
tama punja...*

'I salute the lotus feet of my Guru, the Ocean of Compassion and God in the form of man, whose words, like the rays of the sun, dispel the heavy darkness of over-powering delusion.'

A certain amount of importance is attached to these lines, as in the phrase *nara-rupa-hari* Tulsidas seems to refer to his guru both generally and specifically, and we can there-

fore safely conclude that he was in fact the disciple of a holy man called Narhari.

Ram Bola remained with his guru for six years in all. He proved himself to be an exceptionally intelligent pupil with a very good memory. During this period he had a good grounding in the grammar of Panini, and as he himself says, the history of Ram's life and its significance and lesson to humanity was taught to him over and over again. Tears filled the eyes of Narharidas when Ram Bola told him about his early childhood days. So we can assume that a bond of deep affection existed between the teacher and disciple. Another *sadhu* called Sesa Sanatana was greatly attracted by the bright and winning ways of Ram Bola and he asked Narharidas to leave the boy with him for further education. Narharidas agreed and Ram Bola stayed with Sesa Sanatana and studied *Veda*, *Vedanta*, and other scriptures for fifteen years.

By this time Ram Bola had grown up to manhood and was almost twenty-eight years old. Having completed his education the desire to visit his paternal home and village arose in his heart. He came to Rajapur and found his family house in ruins, his father dead and no surviving relation left to welcome him, after his long absence from home. The villagers, however, constructed a new dwelling-place for Ram Bola, where he lived and recited the Ram Katha in the traditional way of the scholarly and devoted Brahman priest. A hut of Tulsidas and a temple dedicated to him are still to be found in Rajapur.

A book called the *Tulsi Charit* consisting of 1,033,962 verses was written by his disciple called Mahatma Raghuvarananda. It has not been published but a reference to it has been found in a magazine called *Maryada*, and Babu Shyam Sundar Das has quoted certain portions from this magazine in his book *Goswami Tulsidas*. It also seems to contradict some well-established facts of his life. *Tulsi Charit*, for instance, says that

Tulsi married three times but traditionally and also according to Beni Madho Das he married only once.

Beni Madho Das relates that across the Jamuna in a village named Tarpita there lived a brahman whose beautiful daughter Ratnavali was of marriageable age. Once when this brahman was on a visit to Rajapur, he heard Ram Bola's recitation of the *Ramayana*, and was so impressed by his learning, intelligence and handsome bearing that he at once decided to approach him with a proposal of marriage. Ram Bola was at first unwilling but agreed only after a great deal of persuasion. The wedding was then celebrated in the *Samvat* year 1583 (1526 A.D.) on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Jetha* (May-June). Ram Bola was devoted to his wife and the short period of his married life lasting for four years was marred by but one event, and that was the death of his only son in infancy.

Once, during his absence from the house, Ratnavali's brother came to visit her, and she left with him for her parental home without the permission of her husband. Ram Bola, who could not bear to be separated from his wife even for a single day, was very upset on his return. Whenever similar occasions had arisen for Ratnavali to visit her parental home Ram Bola had not allowed her to go. The restriction was naturally very irksome to her, and so she made the best of this opportunity. So when Ram Bola followed her to her father's house, it is likely that Ratnavali felt somewhat irritated. The good old Indian custom of married daughters frequently visiting their own family, though allowing husbands to accompany them as an escort to and fro, disapproves of their spending the same length of time as the wives in the house of the father-in-law. Unhampered by the many social conventions of her married life, and irrespective of her age, the woman once again enjoys the freedom of her childhood days, and this brief respite from the heavy and monotonous duties of her own home is

welcomed by all Indian women. Thus not dreaming of the response it would evoke, and maybe without any thought, Ratnavali was led to speak her famous words which suddenly brought into activity that latent spirituality which we must assume was unconsciously seeking an outlet in his mind. And so Fate, which had a greater destiny in store for him, wove its most intricate design from these most ordinary circumstances and formed a setting for the renunciation of the poet Tulsi, whose inspiring words were to illumine the hearts of all seekers of God for generations to come. Ratnavali said :

*Lājana lāgata āpko, daure āyehu sāth,*

*Dhika dhika aise prem ko, kahā kahun  
main nāth ;*

*Asī-charama-maya deha mama, tā me  
jaisi prīti*

*Tulsi jon Sri Rām manh, hota na tau bhara  
bhīti.*

'You do not feel ashamed to run after me, what shall I say, my Lord, but fie on such love ! If your devotion to Ram could equal your love for this body, composed of skin and bones, then you could surely overcome the fear of *samsāra*—the cycle of birth and death !'

Ram Bola took these words to heart and at once retraced his steps from his father-in-law's house. Ratnavali begged him to stay ; her mother followed him a long distance, but he could not be turned back.

And since then for centuries the popular mind has dwelt in turns just on the burning *vaiśāgya* that lit up the heart of Tulsi at this moment, and then on the despair that seized Ratnavali at this unexpected loss of husband and home ; and the heart of the people has so swayed in sympathetic and conflicting emotion from one to another that this incident has found a permanent place in the great mass of the devotional consciousness of the nation. And we cannot help feelin : that whether scholars and historians endorse or refute this

incident, it will nevertheless remain as part of a beautiful folk-lore handed by word of mouth from father to son.

Beni Madho Das says that Ratnavali was broken-hearted and died two years later. But tradition fondly keeps her alive to an old age when she once again meets Tulsi who is supposed to come unknowingly to her father's house for rest and food. Whatever the facts may be she disappears from his life at this stage and remains perhaps like the soft memory of a springtime between the wintry hard life of the orphan Ram Bola and the burning mid-summer-like renunciation of the recluse Tulsi.

Incidentally, in this connection, we must point out the noble path that the history of this country has forced upon its women. Throughout the Rajput history we know how many times women sent husband, brothers, and sons to the battlefield, sometimes hoping for the best, but when the odds were great, knowing for certain that death at the hands of the enemy awaited their menfolk. Tulsi's own Ram is a case in point. Were it not for mother Kausalya's sacrifice, could he have gone so light-heartedly into fourteen years exile, and were it not for Sita's close co-operation and understanding, could he have fulfilled the ideal of kingship which decreed that sovereigns do not reign for their own pleasure but for the welfare and happiness of the people ? Thus, it seems but right and proper that Ratnavali should burn for a short sweet moment as a beacon-light in the life of Tulsi. We would gladly, if we could, give to the reader a fuller account of this episode—whether the words were unconsciously spoken or whether they were the expression of her own mode of life and thought, but unfortunately the dark curtain of the past closes down on our attempt, and we are left with no option but of following Ram Bola in his life of wanderings.

(To be continued)

## IN MEMORIAM

By SISTER AMIYA

It is with a feeling of great loss and sadness that we announce the death of Mrs Carrie Mead Wyckoff on July 23, 1949 in Hollywood.

Sister Lalita, as she was more familiarly known, was one of the 'Mead Sisters' who entertained Swami Vivekananda for six weeks in their home, seven years after his triumphant appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. Thousands of American men and women met this brilliant young Swami from India, and listened to the ancient-yet strangely new-philosophy he preached, and each understood and accepted him according to his own development. Of Christ, Tennyson said: 'Thou seemest human and divine'; of Vivekananda Sister Lalita said: 'It was as if Christ himself had come in our midst.' She recognized in him the human and the divine, and that flaming spirit of divinity she worshipped for the rest of her life.

Later she met Swami Turiyananda, another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and he became her *guru*. It was he who foretold the 'quiet work' she was destined later to do to help establish the Vedanta movement already started by Swami Vivekananda.

For almost thirty years after her personal contact with holiness, this widowed mother followed the even course of her life, rearing her only son to maturity, and, by her own example, instilling in him the living truths she had learned from the wise. 'Be pure; be true; be strong!' How many times during those years he must have heard this golden precept, until it became a very part of both their lives.

When, however, the time came that her work should begin, she could see no connection between the sudden loss of her son in 1925 and her meeting with Swami Prabhavananda in 1928. Yet later she understood that it could not have been otherwise. For, although she did not know it, she had a great

service to render, and for that all personal ties had to be loosened. Therefore, when she met this young monk of the Ramakrishna Mission, arrived from India, her still grief-stricken heart went out to him, and immediately there sprang up between them a friendship which time only strengthened and which death cannot end.

Swami Prabhavananda had come from Portland to Los Angeles on a lecture tour, and when he was ready to return, he, half-jestingly, invited Sister Lalita to come to Portland with him. Shortly after his return she followed him, and lived with him there until, after more than a year, she herself suggested that he go with her to Los Angeles and open a Vedanta Centre in her home.

Thus it was that, in 1926, she offered her home and everything she owned to Swami Prabhavananda for the continuance of the work he had come to do. And she never looked back. She emptied her box of spikenard and then retired with such complete self-effacement and humility that very few casual visitors to the 'Vivekananda Home' ever knew of her presence.

When Swami Prabhavananda started his work in Hollywood, the household consisted of just the two of them, and together they cooked, kept house, and worked in the garden. Now, today, after twenty years, the household of the Vedanta Society of Southern California consists of more than 20 young men and women, divided between the Convent near Santa Barbara, the Monastery near Laguna, and the Centre in Hollywood.

Although Sister Lalita took no active part in the public work of the Vedanta Society, its growth had not been possible without her utter selflessness and quiet encouragement. Yet, in this self-retirement there was no stagnation. She grew with the



work, and every spiritual counsel she ever heard the Swami give to another, even to the latest comer, she applied to herself. The Swami gave her no personal spiritual instruction; she gleaned with the others and so attained the fulfilment of her life's purpose.

'Her eyes were homes of silent prayer,' and shone with the lustre of the Spirit. But she never preached, and only unwittingly spoke out of her own wisdom. Invariably she would preface her answers to questions by saying, 'Well, Swamiji used to say...' or, 'I read in one of the books....' But her answers were always right and always helpful. Her two most oft-quoted precepts were: 'Quit trying to rub out spots; keep your eye on the Goal,' and, 'Success is not in never falling, but in getting up each time.' And certainly her life was a living example of these precepts. She never gave up the struggle. Often she would say, 'No one is too old if one is really sincere.' As long as she was able, she went to the shrine room every morning and evening for meditation. Sometimes, before seating herself, she would remain prostrate before the shrine for a long time. One day the Swami questioned her about this practice; her explanation was

that at times she had to wait longer for the Light which always came whenever she bowed down before the Lord. In her humility she attributed every delay to her own unworthiness.

Thus her life became daily more exalted, and her eyes grew brighter by their contact with that Light. It is not possible for one to remain long in the consciousness of God and still live, and soon it became evident to those who knew her well that the sands were running low and that the time had come when the eyes must lose their brightness. With her last conscious breath she called aloud the names of her beloved Swamiji and Swami Turiyananda, and then, in still more ringing tones, the name of Ramakrishna. Many a time in later years she had stressed the power of that Name to one who, hearing it from her dying lips, could not doubt its truth.

Truthfulness, selflessness, and humility belonged to her. Loyalty, obedience, and unquestioning faith she cultivated, more for the benefit of those she left behind, than for her own need. And the memory of these things in her is our heritage.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Prof. Dr Helmuth von Glasenapp is the most distinguished German Indologist living. In *Germany and India* he gives a very interesting account of German Indology from its early beginnings up to now. Previously, in this year, we were able to publish two other accounts of Indology, one French and the other Soviet, from two outstanding French and Soviet Indologists of our time. Together these three articles cover a very large and important area of Indological researches in the West. For this reason they will be of in-

estimable value to all interested in the subject. We also hope that they will act as a great spur to Sanskritic studies in India. ...

'*Ram's Wish*' by Gertrude Emerson Sen, author of *Voiceless India* and *The Pageant of India's History I*, is an inspiring and intimate picture of Sri Ram Maharaj whose consistent life of simple spirituality and reliance on God has left an abiding impression on so many who had met him. She knew him closely for many years, and the story told here so simply and well will be found greatly edifying. ...

Mrs C. K. Handoo who is already known

to our readers has made a special study of the life and works of Tulsidas. *Tulsidas I* is the first part of her article on the saint's life; the second part will appear next month. The account of his works will be published serially in three articles from January 1950. The writer's approach is through the heart, which is the right one in such cases, for a mere intellectual discussion which fails to penetrate beneath the husk of things gives us little that is significant to life. . . .

### SHOULD SCIENCE TAKE A HOLIDAY ?

The question would have seemed ridiculous to a nineteenth century man, especially of the West. Today the thought seems to be entertained not among a few. There are evidences of a very critical attitude towards science; one can almost say there is some sort of revulsion against it and scientists among many. Some months ago Bertrand Russell, in a broadcast from the BBC, predicted the rise of a strong anti-scientific temper among the peoples of the world, unless the prostitution of science for destructive purposes was quickly put an end to. This is very true. The present critical attitude is in sharp contrast to the nineteenth century worship of science, when it seemed to stand for all that makes for freedom and happiness.

As usual the worship went to unreasonable lengths; there was a lot of confused thinking. Somehow or other men came to believe that free thought and enquiry and moral virtues were inseparably connected with the pots and tubes and mathematical tables in a laboratory. The twentieth century has, however, made the fact widely clear that science is ethically neutral. Science does not say which things are good and which bad. Taking some values for granted science can, of course, say a good deal about the way they are to be realized. There is something which is prior to science; and the value or its lack, of science depends on what ends it is made to serve. The ends of life are not 'scientifically' obtained—but known through other sources—which

of course does not mean that such knowledge is purely subjective.

The nineteenth century blind emotional attitude towards science arose when men in many parts of the West transferred their allegiance from the true God of Heaven to false idols of the earth. For this the Church which held the mind in sectarian bondage and in other ways stood against human happiness and freedom was largely responsible.

Today man is playing with the atom bomb as the ape in the *Hitopadeshu* played with the carpenter's wedge and lost both tail and life. We can escape from such a catastrophic conclusion of science not by returning to early superstitions but by balancing science with a superior knowledge. The remedy lies in a large conception of science. We must stretch the term to include researches in fields which are other than the sensible. There is a prejudice that all knowledge of data which cannot be sensibly observed, weighed, or measured is in some sense subjective. But facts are not confined to the sensible realm alone. Our moral feelings do have an objective basis, which has been discovered by spiritual 'observers' (*rishis*). It is in this sense that *Shruti* or Scripture in India, is called *apaurusheya* which literally means of non-human origin. Stated in a modernized form this means that Spiritual Truth is not the subjective experience of a particular person but is an objective Reality. Those who have had experience of It were just observers.

We cannot do away with the rational approach to the problems of life. To do so would be suicidal and moving from the frying pan into the fire. When we emphasize moral values as prior to scientific knowledge we do not mean that moral values lack an objective, rational basis. Unless we see the scientific character—in a broad sense—of a genuine spiritual quest, we shall be keeping alive a dualism which cannot but lead to destructive action. If you say morality lies beyond science, you mean it lies beyond truth, and when you say this you cannot have the same

respect for it as you have for what you know to be grounded in an objective reality. We must therefore have a conception of science that is wide enough to embrace all approaches to Truth. Not only that; the spiritual approach should be recognized as of the first

importance, since it alone gives us a knowledge of the end which science should serve. A spiritual view of science will give us the balance that is so badly needed today in a world torn by power politics and irrationality.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SRIMAD-BHAGAVADGITA. TEXT, TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT AND OF THE GLOSS OF SRIDHARASWAMI.** BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA. *Sri Ramakrishna Math, Myslapore, Madras. Pp. 536. Price Rs. 7.*

This is one of the many welcome latest additions to editions of the *Bhagavadgita*, which, when properly accomplished, imply an intensification of attempts at propagating the essence of the spirit of Indian culture. The majority of these editions take as their basis the standard text of the *Gita* as known to Shankara, and their rendering, when it has been carefully done, generally follows the exposition of the Acharya. Scholars have established it beyond doubt that, in spite of its *shrouta* affinity and inspiration, the *Bhagavadgita* was primarily and professedly a treatise of the school of the *Ekantins* (known in the *Mahabharata* itself as well as in the *Puranas*, the *Vishnu* and *Bhagavat* particularly), who like their cognates, the *Bhagavatas*, the *Pancharatras* and the *Sattvatas*, had peculiar leanings towards Bhakti as the dominant guiding principle in life. This indeed is the cardinal tenet running through the work of *a li* *srastranyaya*, like the thread of a garland. While it is a pity that glosses by thorough adherents of this school have not come down to us, it is a fact that an influential section of commentators belonging to the Shankara school and claiming traditional affiliation, have recognized this element and emphasized its importance. Sridhara reiterates this position towards the close of his gloss (*Bhagavadbhakter-mokshan prati sadhakatamatva shravanat*, xviii, 78) and in the genuine Vaishnava manner expresses his indebtedness to the tradition, particularly to his guru Paramananda. With a double-entendre on his name (in the last but one verse of his gloss as also in the first verse of the Introduction), which is sadly missed in the present rendering, he dilates on the significance of his own name (*shri-dhara*) betokening the 'putting on the glory that has been bestowed by the dust of the lotus-feet' of the blessed teacher. The gloss of Sridhara who was one of the earliest of this class of commentators and who was followed by Nilakantha, Madhusudhana Sarasvati and Viswanatha Chakravartin, earned immense popularity all over India, though up till now no English rendering of this commentary was available. We are thankful to the learned Swamiji as

well as to the publishers for undertaking this job and for making the work available to the English-reading public.

The translation of the text, which generally, almost scrupulously, follows Sridhara's exposition, as well as the rendering of the *Subodhini*, the gloss by that author, are both dependable, readable, and lucid like the original, and will be of immense benefit to the general reader. The printing is neat and correct—printing mistakes are rather rare (e.g. p. 42 1.4, p. 364, 1.6 where "attained" is a misprint for "attended"). The rendering into a foreign tongue of a Sanskrit gloss, even when it is written in an easy style, and does not bristle with abstruse technicalities, as here, is by no means an easy task. The manner in which controversial issues, obscure passages (*kutas*) and incidental discussions, discourses, and digressions—of which there are plenty—have been tackled reflects much credit on the translator. We have no hesitation in saying that it will prove to be a boon to beginners. Indian scriptural studies and hope that it will soon pass through several editions and be highly popular.

SIVAPROSAD BHATTACHARYA

**MODERN THOUGHTS AND ZOROASTER.** BY E. J. DIVECHA. *Published by the author, 120, Perry Road, Bandra, Bombay. Pp. 142.*

This is an apologetical sketch of the ancient religion of Persia. The author has sought for his arguments a backing in modern science, which sometimes appears very queer. On the whole, the style of the book is sharp and aggressive; there is no trace of tolerance in it, let alone an attempt to understand other creeds in their own light.

Mr Divecha contends that Zoroastrianism is the only natural religion on this globe. We hold, however, that being natural—when this word is used in its usual sense—is not the criterion of the value of a religion. A teaching which is entirely based on the proof of the senses and the mind cannot be called a religious one. In this context, the author maintains that his faith considers such ideals as poverty and celibacy as against the laws of nature and as impracticable and objectionable. He goes so far as to charge persons who lived and preached these ideals throughout their lives with insincerity and fraud. We wonder whether all the well-known

saints and prophets come within this fold. The writer reveals some lack of psychological knowledge; it is vain to argue against the fact, well established by science, that continence is the main source of physical and mental energy. This is corroborated by the history of so many great persons of non-religious pursuits. Although renunciation is thus rejected, doing good to others is nevertheless claimed to be the highest virtue—we do not quite see how one can be got without the other.

The dogmatic contention that everything is predestined, along with a considerable number of other theological *a priori* claims, does not stand the test of reason, being full of inconsistencies. Surmising, however, that the author does not care particularly much for the judgment of philosophy, all that he states in defiance most of its incontrovertible conclusions must be excused; His book is certainly a good catechism of his conception of Zoroastrianism.

Mr Divecha holds that God can be known through a rationalistic approach; we should very much like to learn it from him, as it would simplify the strivings of many God-seekers enormously.

The author says that Zoroaster was the only sage who understood Nature thoroughly; he thus puts himself on a level with the Christian missionaries, who are claiming the same superiority and prerogative for their Master.

Chapter VII contains a very true verdict on priest-craft. 'Born of a priest is no certificate of the priest. Parrots sitting on the tree of knowledge singing sacred songs do not make priests.' (P. 25).

His observations on celibacy are statements of common prejudices, arising partly from a possible misunderstanding that it is meant for all.

The quotations from the *Gatha* given copiously are excellent and well arranged; their commentary, however, is subject to the above criticism. The reader will find a very clear and instructive exposition of the *Gatha*-teachings on Karma and rebirth. The author's repudiation of the Islamic and Christian ideas of heaven and hell reveal a sense of humour.

The chapters on the influence wielded by Zoroastrianism on other faiths reveal an eagerness on the part of the author to trace everything good, as he understands it, to Zoroastrian sources.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### TEMPLE AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHPLACE

#### AN APPEAL

The village of Kamarpukur in the Hooghly District, West Bengal, is hallowed by the birth of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of the modern age. It draws numerous pilgrims not only from all over India but also from abroad. In this village at the exact spot where Sri Ramakrishna was born a very modest memorial temple is being constructed. Sri Nandalal Bose, the eminent artist of India, drew up the plan of this temple in keeping with the rural environment and the parental cottages of the Prophet which are being preserved as they were. The temple in chunar stone has come up to the lintel level and already a sum of rupees forty-thousand has been spent. The work has now been suspended due to rains, but will be resumed from December. In order to complete the work a further sum of rupees forty-thousand is immediately needed.

Moreover to give a practical moral expression to the Prophet's message a dispensary and a school for the local benefit and a guest house for pilgrims from all countries have to be constructed. The execution of a modest plan for these will cost at least rupees thirty thousand.

Thus a sum of rupees seventy-thousand is required immediately to work out the entire scheme. Considering its importance and urgency we earnestly appeal to the general public and especially the admirers and followers of Sri Ramakrishna to come forward and donate liberally so that these works can be successfully carried out.

Contributions will be thankfully accepted by the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission and Math, P.O. Belurmath, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

General Secretary,

Ramakrishna Mission and Math

## MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL REPORT FOR 1948

*Origin and Growth :* The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swāmi Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas in the Almora district, U.P.—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. In addition to its religious and cultural work through publication of books and the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata*, and a Library consisting of about 6,000 select books on various subjects, the Ashrama also runs a hospital to serve the suffering humanity as embodied divinity, without any distinction of caste or creed, and high or low.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being in response to most pressing local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 to 60 miles taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much larger number of indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission. People come from such great distances and in such helpless conditions that they have to be accommodated anyhow.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such various kinds of major operations can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. There is also a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can normally expect in a small town in the plains are available here.

The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 262 of which 204 were cured and discharged, 26 were relieved, 26 were discharged otherwise or left, and 6 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 9,546 of which 7,977 were new and 1,569 repeated cases. Altogether 51 different kinds of diseases were treated and 58 operations were conducted.

The visitors' remarks show a great admiration for the tidiness, equipment, efficiency, and usefulness of the Hospital. Sri R. Choksi, Director, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Bombay, writes, 'I saw the work of the Hospital and was greatly impressed. A hospital, well-designed and well-equipped in this isolated mountain region, is a notable achievement and gives splendid expression to the Ramakrishna Mission's spirit of service in the cause of the poor and the neglected ... I should like here to record my admiration for the work of the hospital.'

The hospital has to depend for the most part on the generous public for donations and subscriptions. The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1948 shows Rs. 6,419-15-0 as the net expendable receipts, and Rs. 4,994-15-3 as expenditure during the year. The hospital needs funds for its improvement and expansion. Contributions for endowment of beds, one or more, may be in memory of near and dear ones.

The management expresses its grateful thanks for the donations by the generous public and hopes they will extend the same co-operation on which the work of the hospital depends and thus help to serve the sick and the diseased in this far-away mountain region.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned :

SWAMI YOGESHWARANANDA  
President, Advaita Ashrama,  
P. O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

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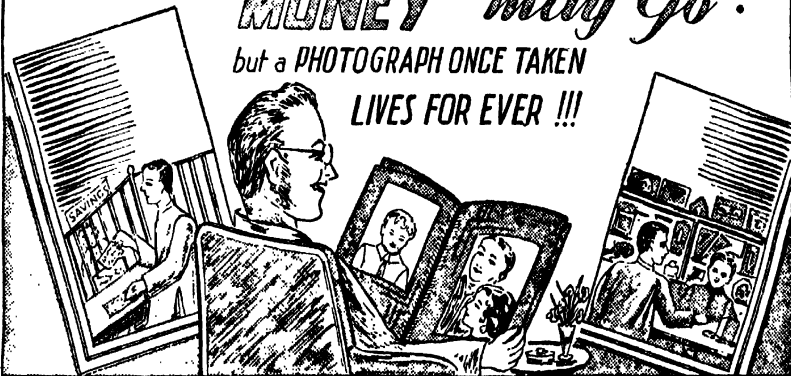
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

‘Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.’

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELURMATHI, 27 APRIL 1932

Reading the American magazine *Asia*, Mahapurush Maharaj was delighted at the news that Russia had guaranteed in her constitution employment for all and said : ‘Well done ! Excellent ! It makes one so happy even to hear of such things. Ah ! what suffering the workers in India have to undergo ! Who cares to think of the poor in a subject country ? Will they not ever see good days ? O Master, do something for them. You came for the sake of the poor and humble alone.’ So saying, he sat for a while absorbed in silence, and then went on to remark, ‘It will come. A way will be found out soon. Swamiji said that, in the coming age, the Shudras will rise. Indications of this are also visible. There are signs of a new awakening among the workers all over the world ; India alone will not be left out. No outside power will be able to suppress this awakening, because behind it lies the Divine Power—the *sadhana* of the *Yugavatar*. Swamiji specially came to know the diverse ways and the diverse fields in which the Master’s Power will operate

in the world ; none else could realize that. Before leaving his body the Master transmitted all his spiritual power to Swamiji and said : “Today I have given you everything and become bankrupt.” And he also laid the whole burden of spreading the *Yugadharma* on Swamiji. Vested with that power, Swamiji also has worked for the good of the world. The ideas he has left behind will, by and by, bear practical fruit in different countries in various ways through different media and will, without doubt, achieve all-round progress all over the world.’ ...

An initiated boy-disciple came and saluted Mahapurush Maharaj who asked him affectionately to sit before him. After enquiring about his health etc. he said : ‘Do you practise *japa* regularly ? Do it as much as you can. Don’t forget to practise *japa*. The Master is the *Yugavatar*. You will find much joy in your heart by continuing to repeat His name. Pray with all your heart : “Lord ! I am a boy, I know nothing. Have mercy on me, fill my heart with love, and faith, and make me realize Your Nature.”

That will achieve everything. Call on Him much and with a yearning heart. While you meditate imagine that the *guru* is gazing at you affectionately and that you are looking at him, full of love. All this does not happen aright in a day. Go on doing it with a simple heart ; gradually it will come.'

Afterwards, he fed the boy with consecrated fruits and sweets. When he went to the roof to wash his hands and mouth, Mahapurushji said : 'This boy's signs are good. He will have attainment. We can know a person by sight. The Master had taught us many of these things. A pleasing outside appearance alone is of no consequence ; devotees have other signs.' ...

Another devotee saluted Mahapurushji and said : 'Maharaj I am continuing *japa* and meditation ; but I am not finding any joy to speak of. And further, I find myself unable to control my mind. Please bless me and tell me how I shall find joy.'

Mahapurushji replied affectionately : 'My child, is it so easy to find joy in *japa* and meditation ? It can only be had after much spiritual practice. Hard and long toil is necessary. The mind has to be pure. The more you feel God as your own and the more you are able to love Him, the more joy you will find in His name. Nothing can be had until the mind is steady. Go on practising *japa*, meditation, and prayer as much as possible. You will see that you will discover new strength in the body ; gradually the taste for His name will come. The mind generally remains scattered among many things. You have to collect the scattered mind and attach it to the object of meditation. Pray much. Prayer is of great help. Whenever you find that you are not able to practise *japa* and meditation, pray with great yearning. Also come here now and then and mix in holy company ; you will have great mental strength by doing so. When you come to the *sadhus*, have discussions about God in a devotional attitude. Otherwise, if you talk of sundry other nonsense, it will bring you no gain and will further

waste the *sadhus'* time. The thing is this : Through *japa* and meditation, prayer, remembrance, study of good scriptures, discussion of God and such other diverse means, you have to keep your thoughts engaged on God. Well, just do one thing. Go now to the shrine room and facing the Master, pray with great intensity and say : "O Master, save me ; I am without shelter and ignorant. O Lord, have mercy, be compassionate, and give me strength. One of your sons has sent me to you." Pray intensely in this way. He will have mercy and fill your heart with joy'. ...

In the afternoon he was listening to letters being read to him. Listening to a particular devotee's letter, he said : 'This is right. If this yearning is sincere, what's there to worry about ? Write to him : "Weep much, call on Him much, feel intense dissatisfaction and suffering, be thoroughly burnt out—then only will you have success. The Master used to say that people shed pots of tears for wife and sons, but how many weep for God ? He who weeps for not finding God is very fortunate indeed. He has surely had God's grace. Is the attainment of peace an easy affair ? How can there be peace without the attainment of the knowledge of Truth ? Real peace is had only when the mind merges in Him in *samadhi* ; not before that. This is not a thing to be had at a bound ; one must be at it always—like the hereditary farmer.' (The allusion is to a story of Sri Ramakrishna. The hereditary farmer does not give up cultivation whether or not the rains come or the crop fails.) ...

A devotee had written a letter praying that he might attain pure love for the lotus feet of the Master even in the present birth. In reply Mahapurushji said : 'Write to him, "Child, I am very glad that you have felt a sincere longing in your heart for attaining love and faith in His lotus feet. Pray to Him with great yearning. He is the Inner Guide ; He knows when and what to give to His devotee. Take refuge in His lotus feet and remain there. A real devotee does not care for this birth or that. This is a very low con-

ception. Pray to the Master only for this, namely, that you may have whole-hearted faith, love, and devotion. Do not say anything about this or that birth. May you be filled in full measure with faith and love, is my sincere prayer. A true devotee's prayer should be :

*Etat prārthyam mama bahumatam janma  
janmāntarepi*

*Tvatpādāmbhoruhayugatā nischalā bhakti-  
rastu ;*

*Divi vā bhuvī va mamāstu vāso, narakē vā  
narakāntam prakāmam.*

'My one and only prayer, O Remover of Hell, is this—that wherever I may dwell, whether in heaven, or earth or in hell, may I have steady love for your lotus feet in all my births, this and subsequent ones.'

When love for His lotus feet is attained, all is transformed into heaven—all becomes blissful. May you have that through His grace." . . .

To the letter of another devotee he dictated the following reply : 'One who seeks the Lord

finds Him. But one should seek Him sincerely. He will reveal Himself only if He is called upon as one *should* call upon Him. The Master used to say : "God is like the Moon, the common maternal uncle to all children. Whoever wants Him finds Him." Nobody can teach another to weep at the pang of separation for not finding God ; it comes of itself in time. . . . When a real want for God will be felt in the soul, when the heart will be distraught at not realizing Him, when at separation from Him the world will appear empty to your eyes—then alone will tears flow, bursting through the heart. Nobody can tell when that good fortune will come. That state of mind will come as soon as His Grace will be had and you will feel it in the heart itself. Call on Him with great yearning, pray to Him much, saying : "Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me !" He will listen to your prayers—take it from me. He is the wish-fulfilling tree to His devotees. I pray sincerely that the Lord grant your heart's desire.'

## THE WESTERN QUESTION (IX)

BY THE EDITOR

We are going to consider the impact of Islam upon India in this article. Our statements will be broad and concerned with the fundamentals, giving an analysis of Indian life at the deepest.

We have said earlier that Islam fractured our social unity. The split still remains and awaits solution on a spiritual basis. The process, started long ago, is far from complete. The spiritual solution of this problem and similar others has been given in our time in an unprecedented manner by Sri Ramakrishna whose practical verification of different faiths can have no other meaning but this. A

purely intellectual and personal explanation of his experiments, treating them as an individual freak, will be utterly inadequate and pointless.

It is futile to seek social unity on a basis of material aims. Political and economic factors are ephemeral and change constantly giving rise to new groupings and tensions. A conception superior to them is needed to circumvent their antagonisms. The purely ethical solution, however appealing generally to refined sensibility, lacks a sound basis in empirical facts. Ethics may differ with taste and feelings, and there is no way of deciding between the truth or falsity of an ethic by an



appeal to empirical facts. The ethics of the 'superman' and the 'democratic' ethics are 'scientifically' speaking, on a level. A rational solution can lie only in the perception of an objective spiritual reality transcending material notions and the subjective fancies of individuals. It lies in the perception of an objective impersonal truth. This fact should be clear to all Indians whose philosophical tradition embraces a larger conception of science and empiricism. ...

The political success of Islam was due first to national weakness, second to the fanatical zeal and superb fighting qualities of its adherents. Circumstances had rendered the Indian society extraordinarily complex. Reform movements which periodically extended the principles of civilization to raw masses of humanity failed to achieve in time a high degree of social cohesion. Further, some of the most powerful ones became one-sided and challenged the broad conception of the traditional system. They also became ossified in process of time and grew into vested interests. Their narrow and negative attitude to life and its impulses led to suppression, large scale hypocrisy, and social degeneration. It is clear vigorous political force cannot be generated from such a weak social basis. A balanced view of life and society as represented by the *varnashrama* ideal is essential for the healthy functioning of national life. The ideal need not imply the hereditary principle.

As examples of wrong emphasis and negativism which led to political listlessness and national disaster we shall refer, as promised earlier, to a few facts drawn from a wide area. These instances are not meant to cast any reflection on any religion but are intended to show the paralyzing influence of partial philosophies of life. The North-Western parts of India were long under Buddhist influence as abundant archaeological evidence shows. One would expect from the nature of the terrain and climate in those parts sturdy qualities of character among the people

there. But when Islam appeared on the scene we do not find there, nor in Kashmir, nor in Western India, Buddhist or Jain rulers and peoples offering real resistance to the marauders from outside. Buddhism suddenly vanishes, and we find the Hindu Shahiya kingdom of the Northwest defending India's marches with rare courage and sacrifice for nearly a century. Behind it were other Rajput kingdoms which, however, failed to combine effectively against the common enemy due to the personal jealousies and ambitions of their rulers. Though we do not know much about the composition of the population of those parts, there can hardly be any doubt that the Buddhists, lay and monastic, were numerous. What part did they play? We do not know much besides their non-activity. If, however, we turn to other directions certain analogical conclusions suggest themselves.

The political conquest of Sind in the eighth century, then under a Hindu king, was made possible by the local Buddhist monks who secretly informed the invading Arabs of a crossing across the Indus. This enabled them to steal a passage and take the Indian army by surprise. Evidently, theological rancour blinded them to the larger matters of national importance. In Bengal, we are similarly told in an extant Buddhist work that the local Buddhists, who were doubtless numerous, welcomed the first Muslim invaders as deliverers. It will be futile to ascribe all this to social oppression. First of all, it has to be answered why did Buddhism which was long dominant on the political and social planes gradually lose ground and driving force?

As a strange ironical conclusion to all this the Buddhists of India were finally obliterated by Islam through conversion and decimation.

In Gujarat in Western India, shortly after the Somnath temple had been sacked and destroyed, the Jain minister of the kingdom where the desecrated temple lay found no better object to his statesmanlike activity than the construction of a temple at Abu at

a lavish cost. A truly amazing conception of duty for a minister of the state at a time of mortal national peril !

Orissa, which had long successfully resisted Islamic aggression under its early rulers, became politically weak when an one-sided *Vaishnavism* cast a paralyzing influence on its later rulers and peoples, and quickly lost its freedom. Similar is the case with Vijayanagar, which, originally founded by the statesmanlike activities of Madhava and Sayana, saints and scholars, lost all political vigour afterwards under rulers and ministers who lost sight of the original balanced conception.

The above observations are intended to make the point that the idea of punishment (*danda*) cannot be excluded from the conception of the State, at least as far as we are able to see into the future. It will be wrong to confuse this idea with aggression or militarism. The conception of the State as a means to a spiritual end does not rule out the use of necessary force. Pacifism and non-resistance logically lead to monasticism. But the monastic solution of the problem of life is a personal solution and cannot be applied to society as a whole.

It is farthest from our intention to speak disparagingly of any faith. We hold all faiths to be approaches to the same Truth. But a faith is not the Truth, it is only one of the many ways to It. A creed which arrogates to itself absolute Truth and fails to make a realistic approach to the problems of life becomes subversive of the social order.

The Islamic period of Indian history has been likened by some, not without reason, to the Dark Ages of Europe, when a gloom gradually spread over the land. A distinguished historian has condemned the political rule of Islam as an utter failure, since its effect was wholly retrograde, so he thinks, as regards creative effort of all kinds among the native population. There is much to be said in favour of this view. And as a judgment on Islamic political rule it is largely correct, for it was marked by destructive action in

many fields over a long period. Yet it will not be quite right to maintain that the creative spark was entirely lost, or that no fresh advances in life were made. There are many things which, despite political rule, diminished the darkness of the period. In fact, the blows of Islam stimulated creative responses along modern lines. Many of the older developments had reached some sort of a dead end. Developments along new lines were called for. New forces arose, despite opposition from many sides, which gradually acquired strength and wrought important changes in the social and political structure. These have ensured the continuity of Indian civilization. For this reason the period was one of breakdown and recovery.

When the Islamic invaders came in contact with the Indians they must have become aware of themselves, as times passed, as very uncouth and barbarous in comparison. The Indians were superior to them in nearly every way : in manufacture and agriculture, in religion and philosophy, in art, literature and science, and in various other apparatuses of civilization. Even in matters of civil administration and statecraft the invaders lacked the vast experience and knowledge of the conquered. In fact they made little alteration in the civil administrative structure. The only things in which the invaders were superior were social cohesion and military tactics.

The Arabs were originally not a very religious and philosophical people. In matters of civilization they contributed little that can be called original. They showed no capacity for independent thought or speculation. They became good commentators and they were important as transmitters of oriental knowledge to the West. In this way they rendered a great service to civilization. The modern Western civilization owes much to their activity of this sort. But the political conquest of the Arabs led to a great transformation of Islam. Particularly the Persians, whose kinship and indebtedness to the Indo-Aryans are well known, made out of Islam

something much more religious and philosophical and interesting. Much of the aesthetic refinement and taste of the Mughal rulers of India was due to this source. The Turks, however, remained very crude even long after their conversion.

Gradually some of the Islamic rulers came to feel the greatness and depth of the native philosophy and culture. This was not liked by the orthodox party of Islam whose religious zeal was upheld by motives of economic gain and political power. The zealots did all they could do to prevent national assimilation. But rare far-seeing rulers of later times tried to free themselves to some extent from this theological incubus and come closer to the national idea.

Islam came with new conceptions of law and government, religion and society. Islamic rule here, as elsewhere, was a theocracy, which means that the State has a theological bias. The bias may take different forms, from the simple levying of tributes from those who differ from the State religion to extreme persecution of unbelievers, like the Inquisition. To Islam's credit it has to be said that its intolerance did not take the extreme form of Inquisition characteristic of the Catholic church in the middle ages, though violent outbursts were not uncommon. Islam's rule was founded on military power, which was for a long time maintained by an extensive slave-system, which formed a sort of ruling and fighting caste. The motive of the ruling classes was generally self-aggrandizement and proselytization which served it. The interest of the people was hardly present before their eyes. As a consequence the people became economically and socially depressed. Much of the magnificence of royal courts and stately buildings, built by indigenous builders, rested upon a foundation of human misery. Such a rule can hardly find support in popular affection, and it found no such support, except in the case of a few exceptional rulers. Very often the degenerate and demoralized ruling princes and classes became political and economic superfluities, able to protect the

people neither from outside aggression nor from periodic internal chaos.

The rulers conceived it their duty to convert non-believers into the 'true' faith. Their fanatical conception of religion, namely, that one faith alone is true, and the others are false and evil, which was derived from Jewish and Christian sources, introduced an entirely novel feature into India. Freedom of conscience in religious matters is an ancient and recognized principle of Indian life. It finds its most emphatic assertion in the conception of the *Ishta devata* or the personal spiritual ideal. Theocratic notions are completely alien to the Indian temper. The identification of politics with religion or of a dogma with the State has been made in Christian and Islamic countries. The conception of the secular state in modern times in the West has therefore a historical basis. The Church there stood against freedom of thought and conscience. But the modern slogan as applied to India is ill-conceived, since it gives a false picture of the Indian past and since it suggests a secular conception of society and a secular solution of the problem of social conflicts. All this is not only wrong but full of dangerous possibilities.

The greatest obstacle to Indian reconstruction is ideological, arising from a misconception of Indian history and culture. We are given to talking vaguely about unity in diversity, tolerance and that sort of thing, without realizing that this unity can have no substantial basis except God. Without that ground and aim diversity can only mean conflict and not harmony. We cannot achieve social cohesion and unity by slurring over this basic issue. Until the various elements of the Indian humanity come to take a common pride in the valuable spiritual heritage of the country, they will never be integrated into a harmonious whole.

Despite gravest provocations the traditional culture has not departed from its tolerant spirit. Compare for instance the attitude of the powerful Hindu rulers and kingdoms of the period with that of the paramount political

authority. Take only two typical instances : the Maratha state and the Vijayanagar kingdom. One would expect Shivaji, whose inspiration was religious and who led a national uprising against Aurangzeb's fanaticism, to take at least some steps to discourage the faith associated with such a narrow temper. But the fact was quite opposite. Shivaji gave instructions to his men and officers never to molest a woman, whatever her creed, or desecrate a tomb, or the *Koran*, or a mosque. He even provided for the illumination of the tombs of saints and fakirs in his kingdom. All this has been recorded by Khafi Khan, an orthodox Muslim historian who was all admiration for Aurangzeb's bigotry. The kingdom of Vijayanagar which prior to the rise of the Marathas, formed for long the chief focus of national resistance against Islam's aggression never adopted bigotry in retaliation for it. The foreign traveller Barbosa writes : 'The king allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance, and without enquiry, whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Hindu.' In Europe of the time such tolerance and liberal spirit were completely non-existent.

The fanatical policy of the paramount power led to great destructive consequences, of which the most calamitous were those which concerned national learning and education. The change in the political power disestablished, as it were, by a sudden stroke the vast system of indigenous education. The state support was withdrawn from institutions which had hitherto been dependent on it. But this was only negative. Worse still, active hostility was shown against them. The big universities and establishments of learning like Nalanda, Vikramshila disappeared all of a sudden. We hear no more of anything in their likeness afterwards. This attitude had far-reaching consequences, as can be easily surmised. The scholars gradually turned away from unremunerative philosophical and academic pursuits to priestly functions, which at least

brought them some pittance to live by. This along with the loss of self-confidence which came with the deprivation of political freedom led to a paralyzing worship of the past. Free thought and independent speculation were given up, intellectual vigour declined, and superstitions and verbal quibbles took the place of rational enquiry and research. Archaism of all types became more and more marked.

Pricelless monuments and works of art, temples and manuscripts, were all destroyed wherever possible. Many brahmins fled from the north to the comparative security of the south. One reason, perhaps the main, why the Buddhist Canon and many Sanskrit works have been discovered in the south and outside India, and why many books survive in translations in non-Indian languages while their originals have been lost here, is to be attributed to this kind of destructive action, in the Indo-Gangetic plains in particular.

Still this is only one side of the picture. There is another side which shows that the creative spark was not lost. It was being rekindled into a new flame and bringing to birth powerful social movements. This creative side is represented by the medieval saints and their followers. Their liberal movements effected important changes in the social structure. Judged by social effects alone, their work was of the first importance. By its side, the doings of the politicians and rulers look trivial and ephemeral.

India's social weakness lay in masses of men nominally forming part of a common society but actually deprived of the true heritage. All hopes of betterment seemed lost to them for the time. Large converts to Islam were made from these sections in the east and the west. It will be wrong to attribute these to force or to economic and political temptations alone. If no progress seemed possible within the old fold, despite its most lofty conceptions, no other way to elevation was open but to seek salvation outside by leaving it. Alarmed by such conversions and Islam's proselytizing zeal backed by force, the

orthodox party sought safety in reaction and further tightened social bonds. This type of mentality is reflected in the several *smṛiti* texts and commentaries of the period. The famous among these were the *Parāsara Smṛiti*, a commentary on it called *Kālanirnaya*, *Madana-pārijāta*, Kulluka's commentary on Manu and the *smṛiti* of Raghunandana, all of which came to have a wide vogue. These seemed to close all gates of society to new-comers and even repudiated many of its members for small peccadillos. Vainly did they seek to protect society by a carapace of stringent and futile orthodoxy. This conservatism was not without some service, but gradually it took on such an extreme form that it became antithetical to the very spirit of the culture it sought to preserve. The real solution of the complex problem came from the side of the liberal reformers.

The general social situation, broadly speaking, was as follows. At one end of the scale stood the conquerors, their followers and converts, at the other were the disinherited social proletariat. The problem was how to bring them all within a common framework by curing the fanaticism of one and removing the disabilities of the other. This fundamental social problem was tackled by a long succession of saints and preachers from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, whose achievements laid the basis for a new regeneration. These saints belonged to the traditional line, deriving all their power and inspiration from a common source. God and religion to them were facts of perception and not an ideology constructed to secure social unity and stability. Their preaching was spontaneous; the driving force of their life was universal love. They did not start with conscious aims of social reconstruction and national salvation which followed as a matter of logical conclusion. The designation reformer as applied to them is therefore not quite right. Their approach was intuitive and they worked from the bottom up. We can now see the tremendous services they have rendered to India, which to contemporaries

probably seemed nothing extraordinary. The great figures of the times were Ramanuja, Ramananda, Kabir, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Nanak, Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas. All of them belonging to long-standing *sampradayas* which have always been like a chrysalis for fresh national regenerations.

Their preaching led to India-wide social uplift in north, south, east and west. The people got culture and new self-confidence in their liberal message. Conversion to other faiths was checked and many Muslims were drawn by their simplicity and charm to accept the new teachings. The preachers taught in one voice the fundamental equality of all faiths, unity of the Godhead, and caste as an attribute of character. They protested against formalism, ritualism, and the rigidity of caste, and emphasized simple devotion as a means to realizing God. They gave a way of salvation that was emotional and easy in place of the philosophical path which was too intellectual and remote from the common understanding.

The process of solidification and synthesis gathered great momentum as time went on. Fanaticism was being worn down. Thanks to this the shattered fragments of the society were being put together. Even Muslim rulers and nobles came gradually under the liberal influence and some of them adopted a national policy in administration. The names of Zainul Abedin of Kashmir, Hussain Shah of Bengal, Akbar, and Dara Shikoh, stand out in this connection. The spirit of synthesis and rapprochement was visible in many fields. Islam was being assimilated into the main body of Indian society.

All this, of course, alarmed the orthodox party of Islam which felt that it was losing ground. It made a final determined attempt under Aurangzeb to reverse this tide. This is the true explanation of Aurangzeb's politics, which was essentially a response stimulated by fear. The great Akbar, one of the most remarkable among the great geniuses of the world, had tried for the first time during this

period to give a real national character to the empire of Delhi. He grasped the essential nature of the problem and showed a liberal temper and a devotion to truth which have not been equalled by any great ruler outside India. His successors, however, gradually abandoned his policy under pressure from the court nobles and orthodox priests, and Aurangzeb completely reversed it. The results of this reversal are well known.

The work of the saints and 'reformers' begun on the religious plane gradually found expression in other fields and brought into birth a new national consciousness. The beginnings of the modern Indian vernaculars are to be traced to this period. A popular language is an essential medium of culture. Truths locked up previously in Sanskrit were put across to the common people in their own language. Ramananda and Kabir preached in Hindi; Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas developed the Marathi literature; Mirabai composed her songs in *Brajabhasha*; Nanak and his disciples laid the foundation of the Punjabi and Gurmukhi. Similarly Bengali, Telugu, Kannada were used and developed by the by the religious writers.

Political forces of a character not known before arose on the new social bases. Politics took on an increasingly national and popular character instead of being confined to princes and nobles. The Marathas, Sikhs, Satnamis, and Jats became politically organized on a religious, but not fanatical, basis. Shivaji's war was not a prince's war; it was a popular war. These powers pulled down the political structure of Aurangzeb and not one stone was left upon another. Aurangzeb's political success was the last flicker of the flame before

it went out. These national powers dominated the Indian scene when sovereignty of the land passed into British hands.

We were drawn into the West's political and economic net before the old problems had been finally solved. The West came with new values and conceptions, science and technique. Many of these were necessary to bring about a quick transformation of Indian society along upto-date lines. We have today accepted, and rightly so, its science and technology and liberal political system; we have recently freed ourselves from its political meshes; but we have at the same time fallen victims to its secular ideology. We have to extricate ourselves from this subtle ideological mesh and build our society on the basis of our true and eternal values with the necessary help from science and technology. We cannot neglect the study of nature, except at our peril, but we cannot neglect the study of man except at a greater peril. Our social reconstruction must rest on an understanding of Man and nature. This is true of the entire humanity. But here we have already a priceless heritage. What can be a greater folly than to lose this?

We have given a brief analysis of the main factors of Indian history upto the time of the British conquest. The last period is very recent and the creative forces in it are well known. We cannot deal with it, though we wanted to do so. But we think we have been able to make the point we wanted to make. We have to bring our survey to a close, which we propose to do in a summing-up in the next month which also closes the year.

(To be continued)

'The powerful men in every country are moving society whatever way they like, and the rest are only a flock of sheep. Now ... who are these men of power in India?—they who are giants in religion. It is they who lead our society, and it is they again who change our social laws and usages when necessity demands; and we listen to them silently and do what they command. ...'

—Swami Vivekananda

# NATURE OF MAN AND RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINES

BY DR TARAKNATH DAS

All religions deal with man's relations with the Universal Spirit, called by different names. All religions have taken the stand and cherished the concept regarding the nature of Man as something other than a 'material object'. Man is Spirit. Man in his essence is Soul. For instance, in Plato's *Phaedo*, we find that Socrates told Cebes :

'Then reflect, Cebes : is not the conclusion of the whole matter this—that the soul is in the very likeness of the divine and immortal and intelligible and uniform and indissoluble and unchangeable ; and the body is in the very likeness of the human and mortal and unintelligible and multiform and dissoluble and changeable. Can this, my dear Cebes, be denied ? No indeed.'

This conception that man's real nature is not merely a physical machine—body—that man is the Soul in the body and the Soul is immortal and divine in nature, is one of the greatest conceptions of the ancient sages of India, thousands of years before the days of Socrates and Plato. In the *Upanishads* and in the *Bhagavad Gita* we have ample expressions of this glorious conception of God in Man. For instance, in the *Bhagavad Gita* we find the following :

'Even as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others that are new, so the embodied Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new.

'Weapons cut It (Soul) not ; fire burns It not, water wets It not ; the wind does not wither It.

'This Self cannot be cut nor burnt nor wetted nor withered. Eternal, all-pervading, unchanging, immovable, the Self is the same for ever.

'The Self is said to be unmanifest, incomprehensible, the unchangeable. Therefore, knowing It to be so, you should not grieve.'

In the *Upanishads* we find the discussion of Brahman, the Universal Spirit, as the Absolute Existence (Sat), Absolute Consciousness

(Chit), and Absolute Bliss (Anandam). It is conceived that the Self or Soul in its essence is no different from Brahman. Thus the *Upanishad* says :

'Brahman is Being, Consciousness and Infinity.' 'In the beginning, my dear, there was That only which is one only, without a second. It is the True. It is the Self. And thou art It.'

This is the conception of the spiritual nature of Man. There is the Divine in man. It is needless to affirm that the spiritual aspect of man's nature is of the highest importance for his survival, emancipation, and true happiness or bliss. Coming down from the highest concept of man's spiritual heritage, one may point out that a rock or a giant machinery made by man's ingenuity, or a calculating machine which solves difficult mathematical problems, does not possess that quality which is the source of all emotions and sensibilities. Thus in probing into man's nature we are forced to take account of love, beauty, wisdom, virtue, and even immortality. One of the most interesting facts about man's nature is this : Not being satisfied with his material possessions or surroundings he is always in search for Inner Peace or liberation from self-imposed bondage, and for true happiness.

In Plato's *Symposium*, we find the following interesting conversation between Diotima, a wise woman and teacher, and Socrates which gives an idea of man's search for Happiness :

'"When a man loves the beautiful, what does he love ?" Socrates answered : "That the beautiful be his." "Still", she said, "the answer suggests a further question, which is this : What is given by the possession of beauty ?" "That" Socrates replied, "is a question to which I have no answer ready." "Then" Diotima said, "let me put the word "good" in place of the beautiful, and repeat the question : *What does he who loves the good desire ?*" Socrates answered, "The

possession of the good." Diotima asked : "And what does he gain who possesses the good ?" Socrates replied, "*Happiness* ; there is no difficulty in answering this."

Thus one may say that the manifestation of the spiritual nature of man leads him to the quest of true happiness. Regarding this search for Happiness, Alcibiades once remarked : 'The wise physician, skilled to heal our wounds, shall prescribe and we shall obey.' This injunction that we are to obey certain spiritual laws laid down by those who attained God-consciousness may not be obeyed and even listened to by many modern physicians of the soul, who try to cure inner maladies, but often make it worse for the patient because of their disregard for spiritual laws and profession of materialism and search for happiness through mere satisfaction of sensual life.

The process of reaching 'Happiness' or really blissful state of Inner Peace has been discussed by the ancient sages of India ; and I shall make a very brief mention of the preliminary process of hard practice of *Raja Yoga*. It involves eight stages or forms of practice : 1. *Yama* (practice of love, chastity, truth, and greedlessness) ; 2. *Niyama* (cultivation of certain positive spiritual attitudes) ; 3. *Asana* (posture of sitting down for meditation) ; 4. *Pranayama* (so-called breathing exercises which can only be taught by the *guru* or spiritual guide) ; 5. *Pratyahara* (withdrawal of the sense-organs from their objects) ; 6. *Dharana* (holding fast to certain contents in our mind) ; 7. *Dhyana* (meditation) ; and 8. *Samadhi* (super-consciousness). Animal instincts should not dominate man, but spiritual consciousness, which does not interfere with man's living in the material world, should be the motive of human activities. In a way this may be termed the religious and spiritual discipline of a man.

Hindu philosophers were quite cognizant that there are various types of individuals. There are some who are predominantly full of inertia or laziness (*tamasic*) ; there are others

who are of active temperament (*rajasic*) ; and the others, whose number is less numerous than the others, are possessed with blissfulness or clear understanding (*sattvic*). In every individual there are the qualities of laziness, activity, and blissfulness ; but a man to become illuminated with spiritual light will have to develop a *sattvic* or pure nature.

Man must get out of laziness. This is the first imperative of spiritual life. Because laziness causes ignorance. An ignorant man develops egotism. From egotism develop types of unreasonable attachment, aversion, and love for the so-called enjoyments of life. These produce afflictions.

One who is bound by afflictions of all kinds cannot have true happiness. Thus the problem is, how can a man get rid of all the afflictions ? The answer is, by *sadhana* (practice of religious and spiritual disciplines). By this process a person can become truly pacific or calm, possessing physical or emotional control ; he becomes at peace with himself and with the universe. Such a spiritual man's nature is fruitfully active to serve others and perform his duty according to the station of his life. He acts with non-attachment or without being a slave of his desires.

Thus it has been said that one must possess right desires or thoughts and ideals ; but he must not allow himself to be a victim of passions. Here is then the theoretical secret : Rise above your desire ; be a master of yourself and attain real freedom. Some of the modern psychologists or psycho-analysts might wrongly suggest that it is the doctrine of repression. In self-illumination, there is no room for repression, but there is the essential necessity of pursuing a course of life which will lead to self-regeneration. As in license there is no freedom, it being really an expression of abuse of freedom, so in unrestrained and misdirected sensuous or sensual life there cannot be Inner Peace. Mere pursuit of material enjoyment cannot give Inner Peace. Thus it was said, 'Man does not live by bread alone.'



Modern psychology has rightly given emphasis to the Sub-conscious or inner life or what is sometimes termed as hidden or suppressed desires. People suffering from hidden or suppressed desires cannot be made happy merely by making them conscious of the nature and root of their suffering. Such a practice, or so-called analysis, does not provide a remedy for a malady. An expert physician may find out that a person is suffering from a serious ailment; but this diagnosis does not provide the needed remedy. There is not a man who is not suffering from some kind of inner malady or other. The difference lies in degree only. But the *Gita* assures us that we can attain freedom and perfect happiness. This can be attained by devotees 'whose happiness is within, whose relaxation is within, whose light is within; that yogi alone, becoming Brahman, gains absolute and true Freedom.'

This state of spirituality in man's life is not easily attainable. Thus the *Upanishads* teach that 'inner or spiritual Freedom cannot be attained by the weak.' Man must have spiritual strength to be free. There are obstacles on the road to Inner Freedom and they must be overcome. The sages of India, treading the road to freedom made mention of a few of them: Disease, (physical and mental), langour, indecision, carelessness, sloth, sensuality, mistaken notions, missing the vital points, and instability.

From the standpoint of spiritual experience, a free man is one who has attained the stage which is beyond all fear. Attainment of this stage is not so easy as it is a very difficult task. We are afraid in proportion to our own consciousness of our Fear due to our limitations. It is by being afraid that we become hypocrites and dishonest and ill-treat others. But the only sublime way of overcoming Fear is to be in tune with the source of All Good and to be conscious of God-in-Man.

The moment one becomes conscious of the God-in-Man, he sees the limitations of his

egotism, which begins to vanish, through the process of self-surrender.

One feels like this: I, an egotist and with my limitations, cannot overcome the obstacles in the way of becoming free and attaining Inner Peace and thus wish to surrender to Divine Will for direction. Thus we find in the *Bhagavad Gita*, a devotee—one who is striving for attainment of True Freedom—practises self-surrender with the following words: 'Oh Lord, Thou residing in my innermost being, I shall follow Thy bidding in whichever way mayst Thou direct me.' Lest there be any mistaken conception, I wish to emphasize that this self-surrender is not fatalism but surcharging the insignificant self of mine with the limitless strength emanating from the Divine. This cannot be explained but must be experienced. (Self-surrender of a lover is not a slavery but surrender with self-mastery.) In the Lord's prayer we repeat, 'Thy Will Be Done.' May I become the instrument to carry out the Divine Will. In such a spirit there is no inaction or fatalism.

In conclusion, then, I wish to emphasize that man is not a machine; man is not merely the body. There is the spiritual aspect of man which is by far the most important in man's nature. Man is seeking for Peace, and when he is in peace with himself and the rest of the universe, then he can spread Peace. Political and economic machineries and military preparedness cannot give that Peace which cannot be disturbed. There must be a sincere recognition of the necessity of that 'spiritual basis of peace endeavours' by men who have attained Inner Peace and are not in the bondage of materialism. Men make organizations; organizations do not create men. Men of Peace can serve the cause of peace through certain instruments,—organizations. Without the peaceful intents of the Inner Man, there cannot be Peace. Thus the problem of cultivation of religious and spiritual disciplines is vital to the cause of World Peace.

## THE LIFE OF TULSIDAS (II)

By MRS C. K. HANDOO

After leaving the house of his father-in-law Ram Bola first came to Prayag at the confluence of the Ganga and Jamuna, and here he took the vows of *sannyasa* and probably the name of Tulsidas as well. From Prayag he went to Ayodhya, where he remained for four months, and thence proceeded to Jagannath Puri on foot, where he reached in fifteen days. From Puri he went southward to Rameswar, then slowly wended his way to Dwaraka on the west coast and then across the plains to the snow-clad Badri in the Himalayas, thus completing the four pilgrimages at the four compass points of India. This homage to the motherland is a well-known way of seeking to reach the Eternal through the physical and geographical unity of India, and it is this vision which sustains the faithful pilgrim as he trudges along the dusty paths, fields, and forests, watches the sun rise and set in a new place every day and partakes the fare of the hospitable poor from village to village. So Tulsidas also trod on the beaten path. From Badri he visited Kailas, the Mansarovar lake, Rupachal and Nilachal mountains, again to Mansarovar, Chitrakut, and Kashi. Since he left his father-in-law's house his travels took in all 14 years 10 months and 17 days. After this, though he continued to go out on his wanderings at frequent intervals, he always returned to the banks of the Ganges in Kashi.

Four places in Kashi are associated with the life of Tulsidas. At Assi Ghat on the Ganges he established a Hanuman temple and lived in a cave nearby. The last days of his life were also spent here. In the compound of the temple of Gopal a small room is still known to be the place where he wrote the *Vinaya Patrika*. The two other places are Prahlad Ghat and a temple of Hanuman, consisting of twelve images, built by Tulsidas and known as Sankat Mochan Hanuman.

Tulsidas lived in Kashi and recited the *Rama-*

*yana* daily. A very interesting anecdote is related by Beni Madho Das and is also widely prevalent in the traditional and other accounts of the life of Tulsidas. We shall repeat it also. The spirit of a dead man was bound to a peepul tree for some evil deeds of its past life and was spending its days in great agony. Tulsidas passed that way daily and poured water at the root of the tree after his morning bath. This released the spirit who showed himself to Tulsidas and wishing to express his gratitude asked him how he could repay him for his kindness. Tulsidas said he did not desire anything but the vision of Ram. The spirit replied that this was beyond his power but he could tell him the means by which his wish could be fulfilled. The spirit then informed him that when Tulsidas recited the *Ramayana* Hanuman came to listen to him in the disguise of a leper dressed in rags. He was the first to come and the last to leave, and it was within his power to give Tulsidas the boon of Ram's *darshana*. Next time Tulsidas looked carefully at the audience and spotted the leper. After the recital was over and the crowd departed and this man also was about to leave, Tulsidas fell at his feet and begged him to fulfil the desire so dear to his heart. In vain the leper protested, but Tulsidas clung to his feet and implored him over and over again to be kind. At last the visitor said, 'Go to Chitrakut and there you will be blessed by the vision of Ram'. Tulsidas left for Chitrakut immediately. Throughout the journey his mind dwelt on Ram, the possibility of Ram's *darshana*; when he looked back on his own mediocre life he felt despondent, but his heart filled with hope and his steps became buoyant when he thought of 'the grace of Ram which is never satisfied even through its own compassion.' (*jāsu kripā nahin kripā aghāti*).

On reaching Chitrakut he lived at Ram Ghat, started on his daily recitation of the

*Ramayana*, and followed his usual routine of life as in Kashi. One day, while going on his *pradakshina* round he saw two princely looking boys of fair and dark complexion running after a deer with bow and arrow in hand. Though Tulsi greatly wondered at their beauty and felt very much attracted towards them he could not guess that they were Ram and Lakshman. According to another version quoted by Sir George Grierson, Tulsi saw the two brothers with Sita and Hanuman returning to Ayodhya after the death of Ravana and the crowning of Vibhishana as King of Lanka. Tulsidas at first mistook the sight for a scene from the *Ram Lila* but when he discovered his mistake he wept inconsolably. Hanuman pacified him in a dream, however, and said that he had been the recipient of great grace and no man in the age of Kali could expect more. Instead of weeping over it Hanuman commanded Tulsi to go and serve Him.

Early in the morning on the Mauni Amavasya day in the year Samvat 1607 (1550 A. D.)—it was a Wednesday—Tulsi once again had a vision of Ram. Tulsidas was making sandalwood paste for the use of *sadhus* after their bath in the Mandakini river. Ram came to Tulsi in the form of a young boy and said 'Baba, give me some *chandan*!' Tulsi, intent on his work, handed it over to him without looking up. Hanuman seeing him thus lose a second opportunity took the form of a parrot and gave him a warning. An oft-quoted verse describes the situation thus:

*Chitrakut ke ghāt par, bhayi santan ki bhir*  
*Tulsidas chandan ghiise, tilaka deta raghuvir*  
 'The ghat of Chitrakut was crowded with holy men and Tulsi rubbed the sandalwood with which Raghuvir anointed Himself.' On hearing the cry of the parrot Tulsi looked up in great bewilderment, but in the twinkling of an eye Ram had disappeared leaving Tulsi in deep meditation oblivious of the outer world. Hanuman once again came to the rescue and brought Tulsi back to ordinary consciousness.

In Samvat 1626 (1569 A. D.) the poet Surdas came to see Tulsidas. He showed him

his *Sur Sagar*, from which he read out some verses to him. Tulsidas praised the book. They spent seven days together after which Surdas returned to his place. We think the latter wrote a poem in memory of this visit in which he starts by saying, 'Blessed am I that I have come to the lotus feet of the best amongst the holy ones' (*dhanya bhaga mama santa siromani charana kamala taki āya un.*)

Another story is told of the meeting of Tulsi with Nabhadās, the author of a book called *Bhakta Mala*. Nabhaji once came to Kashi and just before he left he paid a visit to Tulsi. Unfortunately Tulsi was in meditation at that time and Nabhaji returned without meeting him. When Tulsidas came to know that Nabhaji had left for Brindaban the same day he decided to make personal amends for his apparent discourtesy. He started for Brindaban, and on his arrival there, when he went to see Nabhaji, he found himself in the midst of a feast which the latter had arranged for the *sadhus*. Tulsidas, though uninvited, also sat amongst the guests. Nabhaji took no notice of him and perhaps as a result of his indifference, when *khir* was being served Tulsi had no cup in which to hold his share of it. But he was up to the occasion. He picked up the shoe of a brother-guest and said that it was a fitting vessel for him to receive the *khir* and eat from it. Nabhaji's heart was touched by Tulsi's humility and devotion, and he at once went to him and embraced him with great affection. A beautiful verse in Tulsi's *Dohavali* gives expression to the same sentiment, though we cannot say that it was written in memory of this incident. It is as follows:

*Āp āpune te adhik, jehi priya Sitaram*  
*Tehi ke paga ki pānahi, tulasi tan ki chām*  
 'He who loves Sita and Ram more than "me and mine", the skin of Tulsi's body will serve as a shoe for his feet.'

Though Nabhadās does not mention the above meeting with Tulsi in his writings, yet in his book *Bhakta Mala* he has written a few verses in praise of him as follows:

*Kali kuntāla jīva nistāra hita vālmiki  
tulsi bhayo*

*Tretā kāvya nibandha kari sata koti  
Rāmāyan*

*Ika achchhar uchchare brahma hatyādi  
parāyan*

*Aba bhaktana sukha dena bahuri vapu  
dhari līlā vistāri*

*Rāma charana rasa matta rahata āhinisi  
vrata dhāri.*

'For the liberation of the wicked creatures of Kali Valmiki became Tulsi, and described anew the indestructible *Ramayana*, the poem of the Treta Age, the utterance of one word of which washes away the great sin of the killing of Brahmanas and the like; now to bring happiness to the devotees he is reborn and is again showing his *lila* and day and night he remains steeped in the sweetness of Ram's feet.'

As the contact of Tulsidas with Mirabai has been dealt with in a previous article (*Prabuddha Bharata*, January 1949), we shall not go into it again except to remind the readers of the letters that these two great saints exchanged between themselves. Beni Madho Das says that this event took place in Samvat 1598 (1541 A.D.).

When the poetic talent of Tulsi first found expression he would compose verses in Sanskrit during the day but would completely forget them overnight. This went on for a week. On the eighth day Tulsi saw Siva and Parvati in a dream in which the former said to him, 'Do not try to write verse in Sanskrit; one should not imitate others without thinking. Go to Ayodhya and write poetry in your own spoken language. Through my blessings it will be as fruitful as the *Sama Veda*.' Though very much surprised, Tulsidas obeyed the command and went to Ayodhya. After some time in the Samvat year 1631 (1574 A.D.) on the *Ram Navami* day Tulsi commenced the famous *Ramcharit Manas*. We wish specially to point out to our readers that according to Beni Madho Das he was at this time seventy seven years in age. To all those who labour

and struggle without apparent success it is heartening to note that conquest and achievement may come even in the evening of their lives, as it came to Tulsidas. In Samvat 1633 (1576 A.D.) in the month of Margashirsha, on a Tuesday, during the bright fortnight, it was the anniversary of Ram and Sita's wedding and on this auspicious day after two years, seven months and twenty-six days Tulsi completed the *Ramcharit Manas*. The first person to hear of this book was a renowned *sadhu* of Mithila called Sri Ruparun Swami who had cultivated the attitude of Raja Janak and who looked upon Ram as his son-in-law. After this Tulsi returned to Kashi.

In Kashi Tulsidas first recited the poem in the Viswanath temple. At night the book was left near the image of Sri Viswanath and in the morning when the temple was opened in the presence of a large number of holy and learned men they found *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* written on the book with the signature of Lord Siva Himself. In fact these appreciative words were not only written but they were heard to echo and re-echo within the temple walls. The spectators—perhaps comprising the audience of the previous day's recital—were duly impressed. And in this ancient city of Kashi, which had been the seat of Sanskrit learning and stronghold of orthodoxy since the dawn of history, this news spread like wild fire. The intellectuals raised a storm of opposition. The Divine *lila* should be sung in no language other than the language of the gods, *deva bhasha*, and that was Sanskrit. The great mystery of the descent of the Supreme Godhead could not be thus desecrated, they said in pious horror. The persecution of Tulsidas that followed proves how strongly ingrained was the language prejudice, but befitting his role as a great teacher, and in refreshing contrast, is this great quality of vision and imagination that he showed by striking out a new path for himself in the choice of the language of the common people.

Already the Mughals were well established

in India and the influence of the rulers was undermining the idealism and tradition of the country. It is no exaggeration to say that Tulsi's *Ramcharit Manas* proved to be a great force in preventing the disintegration of the *Sanatana Dharma* and helped in giving back to the people confidence in themselves and faith in their own culture. The book proved to be an immediate success, and since then it has been enshrined in the heart of the common man. In all Hindi-speaking provinces its popularity is undisputed. Though in the palaces of the rich it might prove to be one of the diversions of life, but in the cottage of the poor where life goes on in the usual rut it is a source of endless joy. Through constant repetition many of its lines and phrases have become well-known quotations, and the influence of this book on the life and thought of the people cannot be over-estimated. Often at dusk in the village, after a hard day's labour and a frugal meal, when the old and the young are assembled together to hear the recital of this most wonderful poem, they are so completely transported into the Ayodhya of Ram that at his banishment the song breaks down. The gathering silence becomes pregnant with deep emotion, and through the rustling of the *neem* leaves and the wailing cry of the jackal in the distance are heard the quiet sobs of the heart-broken people for the sorrow that befell Ayodhya at the departure of Ram to the forest.

But a narrowness of heart and a spiritual arrogance had completely blinded the pandits to the greatness of the book, and they were so enraged at its increasing popularity that they decided to get rid of it by shady and unscrupulous means. They engaged two professional thieves to steal it hoping to destroy it altogether. When the thieves tried to enter Tulsidas's hut at night they found two young boys of fair and dark complexion walking up and down with bow and arrow in hand guarding the entrance of the hut. Observing them thus vigilant the whole night, the mind of the thieves was purified. The next morning they

made a confession of their intentions to Tulsidas and inquired who were his night watchmen. On hearing what they had seen Tulsidas shed tears of joy and distributed all his possessions to the poor; he congratulated the thieves on having had a vision of Ram and Lakshman, and they also repented, fell at his feet and reformed their lives. This incident has been related by Sir George Grierson, the well-known Orientalist, and Priyadas, a disciple of Nabhadass, has also mentioned it in his commentary on the *Bhakta Mala*.

It is also said that Tulsi once brought a dead man to life. This news travelled to the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, who sent for Tulsi and asked him to perform a miracle in his presence. Tulsi said he knew nothing except the name of Ram, but Jahangir was annoyed and he imprisoned him and said Tulsidas would not be set free until he proved his supernatural powers. Tulsi then prayed to Hanuman, who appeared with a great army of monkeys and caused great havoc in the royal fort. The Emperor was alarmed and asked Tulsi to have them removed. Tulsi once again prayed to Hanuman which calmed the monkeys but he requested the Emperor that as the monkeys had occupied the fort they should be allowed to live in it and he should build a new fort for himself. Describing the incident Priyadas says that henceforth the fort remained deserted. When Shah Jahan succeeded Jahangir, he built a new town in Delhi called Shahjahanabad and with it a new fort, which lends a certain amount of colour to this incident.

In Brindaban some one criticizing Tulsi's devotion to Ram said that Sri Krishna was a perfect Incarnation of God, whereas Ram was only a partial one, in which case he wanted to know why Tulsi did not worship Krishna instead of Ram. To this he replied, 'My mind was attracted to the enchanting form of Dasaratha's son. It is only now that I have come to know that he is even a partial Incarnation of God.' In this reply he tries to show that the true devotee does not love God

because he is great and good, but simply because he cannot help loving Him. The highest devotion knows no barter, seeks no gain, and loves for the sake of love only. This kind of love he has described in the *Dohavali* through the imagery of the *chatak* bird. The two following verses are quoted as illustration :

*Upala barashi garajata tarāji, dārātā  
kulisa kathor*

*Chitava ki chātak megh taji, kabahu  
dusari or*

'The clouds thunder in anger, rain stones, and allow hard lightning to fall. But the *chatak* does not look up to anyone but the rain cloud.'

*Sunu re Tulasidās, pyās papihahi prem ki  
Parihari chāriu masa, jo anchavai jala  
swāti ko*

'Listen O Tulsidas, the *chatak* is thirsty for love only ; so he gives up the (abundant) water of the monsoon, and drinks only if it rains when the *Swati* star appears.'

In Brindaban Tulsidas once accompanied Nabhadās to the temple of Madan Mohan. There he addressed the image in the following words :

*Kahā kahaun chhavi āpaki, bhale bane  
ho nāth*

*Tulasi mastaka jab navai, dhanush  
bāna lau hath*

'O Lord, how shall I describe your beauty, you look so adorable ; but Tulsi's forehead will bend only when you take the bow and arrow in hand.'

It is popularly said that owing to the intense devotion of Tulsi the image changed from that of Sri Krishna into that of Ram with bow and arrow in hand as desired by Tulsi.

Another great man of those times whom Tulsidas met was Nanda Das the well-known poet of Brindaban and the author of *Rāsa Panchādhyāyi*. Beni Madho Das says he was a *gurubhai* of Tulsidas. Incidentally this poem confirms most of the incidents in the life of Tulsidas which have been related by Beni Madho Das.

*Srimattulasi dāsa svaguru-bhrātā pada  
vande*

*Sesha sanātana vipula jnāna jina pāyi  
ānande*

*Rāmacharita jina kinha tapatraya kālī-  
mala-hāri*

*Kari pothi para sahi ādareu āpa purāri  
Rākhi jinaki teka madana mohana dhanu-  
dhāri*

*Vālmiki avatāra kahata jehi santa prachāri  
Nandadāsa ke hridaya-nayana ki kholeo  
soyi*

*Ujjvala rasa tapakāya diyo jānata saba  
koyi*

'I touch the feet of Srimat Tulsi my brother-disciple who is the joyful recipient of great knowledge from Sesa Sanatana, who has written the life of Rama which destroys the three miseries of the world and the impurities of *Kali*, whom Siva Himself gave glory by signing on his book, whose prayer Madan Mohan granted by accepting the bow and arrow, whom the holy ones declare to be an incarnation of Valmiki. He has given inner vision to Nandadas, and has poured purity in his heart as everyone knows.'

The well-known minister of Akbar called Nawab Abdur Rahim Khankhana was a great friend of Tulsi. The following verse is ascribed to him :

*Rāmacharita mānasa vimala, santānā  
jivan pran*

*Hinduāna ko veda sama, jamanahin  
pragata kuran*

'The pure *Ramcharit Manas* is the giver of life to the holy ones ; It is like *Veda* to the Hindus and like the *Quoran* itself to the Muslims.'

Madhusudan Saraswati, a follower of Sri Shankaracharya and a well-known scholar, was asked to give his opinion on the *Ramcharit Manas* by the pandits of Kashi who were envious of Tulsidas' reputation. He was delighted to read the *Ramcharit Manas* and wrote the following couplet in appreciation :

*Anandakānane hyasminjangamastulasi  
taruh*

*Kavitā manjari bhāti Rāma-bhramara-  
bhushitā*

'In Kashi—the forest of joy—Tulsi is a walking Tulasi plant. His poetic blossom is full of beauty on which the bee of Rama is ever humming.'

Amongst the tributes paid to Tulsi by his contemporaries it would not be out of place to mention an appreciation of a modern English writer of the early twentieth century. In an article entitled *Tulsidas, Poet and Religious Reformer* Sir George Grierson writes : 'It would be a great mistake to look upon Tulsidas as merely an ascetic. He was a man that had lived. He had been a house-holder and had known the pleasures of a wedded life, the joy of clasping an infant son to his bosom, the sorrow of losing that son ere he attained his prime. He appealed not to scholars, but to his native countrymen as a whole—the people that he knew. He had mixed with them, begged from them, prayed with them, taught them, experienced their pleasures and their yearnings. He had wandered far and wide, and had contracted intimate friendships with the greatest men of his time—men like Man Singh of Amber, Todar Mall, Akbar's Finance Minister, and Abdurrahim Khankhana. No wonder that such a man who was at the same time a great poet and an enthusiastic reformer, at once sane and clean, was taken for their own by the multitude who lived under the sway of nature and in daily contact with her secrets, with flowers and trees, with beasts and birds, and with hunger and thirst. "Here" they cried, "is a great soul that knows us. Let us take him for our guide."'

During the reign of Jahangir (Samvat 1662-1684) Panjab was in the grip of a deadly plague for many years. It also spread to Agra and it took eight years to eradicate it. In the *Kavitāvali* Tulsidas says :

*Bisin Viswanath ki visāda bado vārānasi  
Bujhiye na aisi gati sankara sahara ki*

'In the Bisi of Viswanath a great sorrow has shadowed the town of Kashi. The miserable

condition of the city of Shankara cannot be described.'

Babu Shyam Sundar Das in his *Life of Tulsidas* says that according to astrological calculations the Rudra Bisi referred to above fell between Samvat 1665-1685. We infer from this that the plague had also spread to Kashi. In subsequent verses Tulsidas has described the suffering caused by the plague and has prayed to mother Annapurna and Hanuman to free the town from this fatal epidemic. From the last verses of *Hanuman Bahuk* quoted at great length by Babu Shyam Sundar Das it is clear that Tulsidas himself had a severe attack of plague from which he almost died. Pain set in his arms, then a gland appeared with fever, and pain spread over his whole body and became unbearable. Medicine and prayer were of no avail. Tulsidas prayed to Hanuman and said, 'There is pain in the leg, pain in the stomach, arm and face, the body is weak through age and full of pain.' And having lost heart in the end he said, 'What I have sown I must reap.' However, it seems that after a long and painful illness Tulsidas recovered ultimately, but he was weak and in the Samvat year 1680 (1623 A. D.) at the age of 127 (according to Beni Madho Das) he cast off his old and ailing body, and having had his full share of the joys and sorrows of the world his spirit soared at the feet of his beloved master Ram. Tradition ascribes the following last verse to him :

*Rāma nāma jasa barani kai, bhayau  
chahata aba maun*

*Tulasi ke mukha dijiye, aba hi tulasi saun.*  
'Having described the glory of the name of Rama I am about to be silent. Tulasi leaf and gold will soon be put in the mouth of Tulsi.'

Beni Madho Das described the time of his death thus :

*Samvat soraha sau asi, asi ganga ke tir  
Shrāvana shyāmā tija shani, Tulasi tajjo  
sharir.*

'In the Samvat 1680, on the banks of the Asi-Ganga (Kashi), in the month of Shravana.

Saturday, the third day of the dark fortnight, Tulsi gave up his body.'

We do not know how many hearts Tulsi left desolate and how many people mourned his death but we do know that 'our own heart trembles like a leaf' (*Pipara pāta sarisa mana dolā*) in the wind at the sudden darkness that must have descended upon the earth at the departure of this gentle and loving saint from our physical and material world into the realm of the spirit. As we think of him we cannot help but being reminded of the great gulf that separates his life from ours ; in deep anguish at our inability to follow in his footsteps we can only cry out from the depths of our hearts in the inimitable words of his own song in which he not only describes an ideal for us to follow, but seems also to state his own mode of life in simple and appealing language :

*Kabahunka haun yahi rahani rahaungo*

*Sri Raghunātha-kripāla-kripā ten santa-subhāva gahaungo.*

*Jatha lābha santosha sadā, kāhun saun kachu na chahaungo,*

*Para-hita-nirata-nirantara, mana karma vachanā nema nibahaungo*

*Parusha vachana ati dusaha shravānā suni tehi pāvuka na dahaungo*

*Vigata māna, sama sitala mana para-guna nahin dosha kahaungo*

*Parihari deha-janita chintā, dukha-sukha samabuddhi sahaungo*

*Tulasidāsa prabhu yahi patha rahi, avichala hari-bhagati lahaungo.*

'When will I live this way of life ! When through the compassion of Shri Raghunath, the Compassionate, I will imbibe the traits of the holy ones. Contented with what I get I shall not expect anything from anyone ; ever intent on doing good to others, I will fulfil this vow with mind, word, and deed ; hearing harsh and unbearable words I shall not burn in the fire (of anger). Without arrogance and with cool and unattached mind, I shall not look upon the virtues of others as faults ; giving up all anxiety for physical well-being, I will accept pleasure and pain with equanimity ; O Lord, thus walking on this path I will gain devotion to Thee.' (*Vinaya Patrika*)

(Concluded)

## VEDANTA—A PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD-UNDERSTANDING

BY PRABASJIVAN CHAUDHURY

The world today needs a philosophy comprehensive enough to include and reconcile from a higher standpoint the various conflicting philosophies with their diverse ideologies. This has been well-recognized in the second Inter-American Congress of Philosophy (held at Columbia University, New York City, in December 1947) where Cornelius Kruse (the Chairman) said, 'Particularistic philosophies no doubt effectively unite a given group, but they disintegrate the world. The task before philosophy and before us, its bearers and ministers, is to discover if possible whether we

can cooperatively find a philosophy, or at least a philosophy in the making, that would unify the world.' In the present paper an attempt is made to construct the outlines of such an ideal philosophy, which, it will be evident, does not essentially differ from Vedanta.

Let us start from what we think the least philosophical but the most influential of the world philosophies, namely, logical positivism, which is ruling the scientists and other tough-minded classes of men. The logical positivists are empiricists believing only in sense-data and logic and holding metaphysics to be an



idle speculation. They believe in positive science with its concepts having explicit and verifiable reference to sense-data and condemn self, substance, causality, etc. as pseudo-concepts having no factual content or verifiable meaning. Science is to them the only knowledge possible and it is but the sense-data systematized by logic (which includes mathematics). This logic too is but a set of conventions as to how to combine the data. And there may be many alternative logics leading to alternative systems out of which the simplest and the most inclusive is to be chosen as the true till a simpler and a more inclusive one is found. Thus there is no absolute truth, the criterion of truth being coherence and simplicity.

Now this philosophy, according to our view-point, is at the first stage of philosophical consciousness in which sense-experience alone is accepted as the ground and content of reality and discursive understanding as supplying some formal rules to order the mass of sense-experience. The formal part is held incidental and not essential to reality. But this outlook is incomplete. For it leaves many loose-ends or unanswered problems: (1) Why is this stream of sense-data and why are these logical forms to hold them together? (2) Why are there stability and uniformity in the sense-data and the same in the understanding that orders them into stable and uniform schemes? The first question leads to the problem of the source of sense-data (which itself cannot be a sense-data) and to the source of logical activity (which itself must be beyond logic). The former source is what is called matter or substance and the latter is mind. Both are metaphysical entities in the sense that they transcend sense-experience and logic. The first question thus leads to the metaphysical question of mind and matter and their relation. The second question leads to the problem of the categories such as substance and causality on the one hand and to that of an identical mind or consciousness on the other. These are

presupposed by any account of positive science and a positivistic philosophy. Thus logical positivism logically leads to metaphysics which it forbids. It is, therefore, a partial philosophy that attains a certain degree of neatness and simplicity by limiting philosophical discourse. We cannot, however, rest satisfied with a fragmentary philosophy (which necessarily breeds a particularistic ideology) but must go ahead with the problems that issue from it.

So we plunge ourselves into the metaphysical problem of mind, matter, and causality. Looked at from the first stage of philosophical awareness discussed before these are but hypothetical constructs of imagination having no basis in experience and are gratuitous; the description of experience in terms of verifiable concepts and laws is warrantable knowledge, the search for some underlying core or substratum of experience is chimerical and useless. But from a second stage of philosophical awareness this search is natural, and mind, matter, and causality are not imaginative constructs but are ontological entities intuited by rational insight and, so, not less veridical than sense-data. These are not *a priori* and analytical like logical laws but are *a posteriori* and synthetic. And, so, they are like scientific laws which are necessary not in the logical sense in which any violation is inconceivable but in an empirical sense in which any violation is a miracle, or a freak of nature is not impossible in itself. Thus causality is an objective characteristic of reality and not a subjective rule for ordering our experience. As regards mind and matter they are the substances underlying the knowing activity (with its logical and mathematical rules and calculations) and the knowable objects respectively. The question of their relation leads us to the two rival philosophies, realism and idealism. The former holds the objects as independent of the mind while the latter holds them dependent on the mind. (Pragmatism and Marxism are respectively idealistic and realistic.) The solution of this

age-old controversy can be found thus. On the empirical level of philosophical awareness (our second stage) the objects are certainly independent of the mind which knows not itself but some thing 'other' than itself. Shankara has urged against the Buddhist subjective idealists (*Vijnanavadins*) his own empirical realism that fire cannot burn itself and the 'otherness' in objects known is given and cannot be explained away. Kant, too, was an empirical idealist (see his 'Refutation of Idealism' in his *Critique of Pure Reason*). If the object is what the mind make it, how is it that we cannot see whatever we wish, for instance, cannot see a bird when faced with a tiger in a forest. So that at the stage of empirical knowledge we have to admit realism. But then we have also to answer some cognate questions. How is it that the mind knows an object which is other than itself? What is their relation in knowledge and in reality? These questions cannot be answered on the second stage of philosophical awareness we are so far dealing with. But that these questions are at all asked shows that there is a third stage of awareness implicit in the second. From the third stage one can view both mind and matter and grasp their relation. For this stage is a higher one transcending the duality of those relatively empirical entities of a lower grade of reality (*Lower grade because explainable from and founded on a higher standpoint*).

In this third stage both mind and matter are realized as bifurcated branches stemming from the Self which is one Self-identical consciousness, free and full of play (*lila*). The figure of the tree is rather crude because mind-matter and the Self are in different planes of reality. The mind is the subjective attitude of the Self while matter is its objective or self-projecting attitude when empirical knowledge occurs. Just as the empirical mind can create dream objects so can the Self create empirically real objects of the waking consciousness. But the Self is only playing or dreaming while adopting these attitudes, so that there is no causal

nexus or any continued identity between the Self and mind-matter. Thus it is that though a transcendental type of idealism asserting the ultimate identity of mind and matter is acceptable, it is confounding matters to argue for an empirical idealism holding objects of empirical knowledge (tables, chairs) to be but ideas or mental stuff. Transcendentally speaking they are one and the same but then they are not even seen as different and real. Empirically speaking they are real and different and not seen as identical. Shankara insists that one has no right to declare the world as *maya* unless and until he has realized it as such by realizing his Self as Brahman. The dream is real while one is dreaming and it is a dream only when he has awakened. However, since the waking experience is relatively more stable and on its basis the dream experience is explainable, it is a higher grade of reality. Similarly the Self is the higher reality relatively to mind (the knowing self) and matter (the knowable self). The *Upanishads* tell us to see the Self as real and nothing else, no differences, which are but names and forms, *maya*. The Self is the Brahman, the highest reality which is indescribable by any known predicate for each represents a lower grade reality. The Self or Brahman, therefore, is describable only as 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*).

We have thus tried to show how proceeding logically from the least speculative philosophy of our time (logical positivism), and finding its limitations and implications, we reach the two fundamental rival philosophies (idealism and realism), and from them to our ideal all-inclusive philosophy. This philosophy can point out from a higher standpoint the relative merits and limitations of each partial system, its relative truth and error. Our ideal comprehensive philosophy with its broad outlook will find a rightful place for each of the ideologies associated with a particularistic system of philosophy and will explicate its limited scope and validity, that is, relative worth.

Implicit in our method is the faith in grades of reality corresponding to levels of philosophical consciousness, the highest level being identical with that of Self-realization and salvation. Again, we have assumed that philosophy is not airy speculation, rather it is nothing if not intuitively grounded; the so-called principles and categories of philosophy must be directly perceived before being asserted. This means philosophy is not discursive or imaginative wandering within the limited field of our ordinary vision provided by our ordinary faculties; instead it is a call to our higher faculties latent in us, a demand to see for ourselves reality as it is in place of conjecturing about it from a distance with narrow mental capacities. To know Brahman we have to become Brahman, say the *Upanishads*. Philosophy is thus not merely an intellectual discipline but also, and essentially, a spiritual discipline, *yoga*. No philosophical truth can ever be attained through mere intellectual arguments based on sense-data, there will be but a multiplication of rival theories, polemics, opinions, and mere verbal quibbles. Nothing is true unless it is experienced and philosophical truths, just like ordinary factual ones, must be experienced. The only difference is that while the latter kind is given to the senses, the former is given to higher

faculties. So that the logical positivists are right in their principle of appealing to experience, only their idea of experience is limited to sense-experience. Now to attain the highest philosophical truth, the Self, one has to transcend his empirical mind and the objectivity of empirical reality and has to realize the spontaneity of the Self that is his real essence which is also the essence of all things. Therefore, to attain an all-comprehensive philosophy which will unite the world the philosophers have to adopt a spiritual discipline of the type of *yoga*. It is a serious error and limitation on the part of Western philosophers to think that such a great thing as an all-inclusive harmonious philosophy, ultimate wisdom uniting mankind, is merely an intellectual feat, as if it is finding a suitable formula to fit a certain series of facts. We cannot get a real solution of our problem so easily, a remedy for our fundamental social ills so cheaply. We have to change ourselves, develop and reform, in order to gain the ultimate truth, and yet, paradoxically, after passing through all these changes we will but discover ourselves, our real Self, the truth of our being and of all things. 'That Thou Art' and 'Knowing that you know everything', say the *Upanishads*.

## THE MARCH OF HISTORY (IV)

By P. S. NAIDU

(Continued from the October issue)

### XVII. GERMANY AND MILITARISM

Among all the European nations that have continued to stay on at the concrete sentiment level or have tended to move down to a lower level, I shall take up Germany and Russia for special consideration. The former is the God on earth of our triadic dialectician, and the latter is the heir-apparent to the greater

disciple of the great dialectician, who succeeded in destroying whatever that was noble and spiritual in his master's thought. The loftiest expression of Germanic culture is *militarism*. It is the concrete sentiment wherein the fiercest type of self-assertion is wedded to crude acquisitiveness to produce intolerant egotism and ruthless brutality. Let me quote

from an article which I published in one of the Madras papers at a time when Germany was marching triumphantly into Russia and many fondly hoped that she would emerge out of the world conflagration as the only mighty power. 'A careful study of the national characteristics of the Germans brings out the fact that *depth* is the outstanding feature of their racial mind. This depth has been reached at the cost of breadth. We know that the Germans excel in science. Precision instruments are obtainable only from Germany. The net result of the over-development of one aspect of the German mind at the cost of others is that when nature demands the satisfaction of the numerous impulses that she has implanted in all of us, the Germans, unable to meet the demand, fly into hysterics and regress to a primitive childish level of obstinacy, cruelty, and brutality. That delicate sense of balance, that golden mean between over-indulgence and impotence which the democratic nations have achieved, is an eye-sore to Germany and a constant irritant of her envy.

'One of the most fruitful devices for getting at the deep-seated motives to a nation's cultural organization is the analysis of its myths and folklore. These legends and tales of fancy are the crystallized dreams of the racial mind, and psycho-analysis has taught us how to interpret them with a view to get at the real motives hidden in them. The Nibelungen legends are the typical folk-tales of the Germans, and in them we find nothing but unrelieved savagery, gloom, and despair. The delight in mere physical prowess, idolization of war, the hacking of Balder, and the cult of Valhalla, dearly beloved of the Teutonic mind, these are but the outward manifestations of the sadistic impulse generated in the German mind by the primitive unsatisfied longings belonging to the lowest level of culture.

'It is a remarkable fact that Germany lacks humorous literature of the better type. The German mind can create a *Faust*, but not *Punch*. And the racial mind of the Teuton

seems to indulge in unholy glee at this very failing which is really an index of cultural degeneration. In the early stages of the second World War one of the German papers gleefully printed in bold letters, "The English should know by now that the Germans never joke." Yes, not only the English but the whole cultured world knows now that for a German even to see, let alone make, a joke it must be about as long as it is broad. Hitler, the ex-Kaiser, Bismarck away back into the dark record—you will find nothing but a procession of mirthless braggarts ruling over dreary robots. The ability to laugh not only at others but at one's own failings is one of the rarest gifts of nature. It can operate only in a well-balanced mind wherein the natural impulses are under proper control. The ill-balanced and hysterical mind of Germany is incapable of developing this sense of humour.

'Since the year 1939 I have been making a careful psychological study of the racial mind of contemporary Germany, and I find that totalitarian Germany is the clearest example of psychic regression. It is a notable fact that man hates not only those who cross his path when he is engaged in the pursuit of his natural goals, but also those who possess and enjoy the objects which he desires keenly, but has not the capacity to secure for himself. Herein lies the secret of the senseless hatred of Germany for the Jew and the democratic nations. Three things occupy the focus of passionate desire in the German mind, land, money, and woman. The German is intensely lustful, but impotent; the German greed for land knows no bounds, but the German is powerless to acquire and keep that land; the German avarice for wealth is enormous, but the capacity for satisfying this inordinate desire is not there. Irritated by failure and cowed down by frustration, the German tries to pour the phials of his wrath on the Jew and the democratic nations who have had the good luck to get and enjoy these objects. It is impotence, physical and psychological,—psychical more than physical—that is the

root-cause of the hysterical behaviour of modern Germany.'

We may sum up, then, the unconscious motives to German brutality in the one word impotence. This impotence operating from the hidden depths of the German racial mind urges the Teuton on to two types of behaviour. One of these leads to compensatory achievement in fields where other nations have not excelled, and the other to destruction of peoples who have succeeded in just those fields where success is desired passionately, but is unattainable. The first is the fountainhead of German militarism, while the second is responsible for the second world war. Lust and greed, the concrete sentiments organized round sex and acquisitiveness, and the impotence to satisfy these fiery passions, are the keynotes to the understanding of the neurotic behaviour of Germany today. German culture should serve as a grave warning to the rest of the world, and to the Asiatics in particular, who seem to be enamoured of the self-regarding sentiment which is the undoing of the West.

#### XVIII. RUSSIA : AN EXAMPLE OF PSYCHIC REGRESSION

After totalitarian Germany, totalitarian Russia. Russian culture, too, is a notable example of psychological regression. I have used this word *regression* so often in the last few paragraphs that a word of explanation seems to be called for here. We have seen how the powerful impulses of the primitive level are steadily organized, and raised to the higher level of sentiments. These cultured sentiments demand constant vigilance and effort, not only to lift them higher but also to prevent them from sinking down to the lower stages of animality and brutality. Often they do sink down giving rise to neurotic troubles of various kinds and degrees. And in a few cases the sinking is so deep that sub-human levels of primitive animality are reached. The plurality of instincts with which we start our life on earth have passed through a long course of evolution. They have all

arisen through gradual differentiation from the primeval instinctual matrix, the *elan vital*. Psycho-analysis has made a special study of these sub-human levels operating between the elemental life-urge and the instincts with which all of us start our lives. When the mind of a cultured person or of a cultured race occupying a high sentiment level begins to disintegrate, then it sinks or regresses first to the instinctual level, and then to the sub-human depths. It is then that various types of insanity ranging from mild nervousness to the severest form of lunacy are generated. Regression, then, is the psychological process of mental degeneration by which both the individual and the racial or group-mind are dragged from civilized levels, first to the lowest conceivable human level, and then to sub-human animal level resulting in the loss of sanity in the case of individuals, and in the loss of cultural achievements in the case of nations. German culture, as we have noted just now, is an example of extremely morbid insanity. Russian culture too is an example of regression, but of a milder type. Just now it is in the borderland between the normal and the abnormal, wherein it is rather difficult for the ordinary man to detect any symptoms of insanity, but any day it may sink lower and share the fate of Germany.

These remarks about the sorry state of Russian culture will provoke, I am sure, the most hostile reactions in the minds of many of my friends engaged in psychological studies. Not long ago I was inclined to rate very high indeed the new civilization of Soviet Russia. I was impressed by the contributions of Russia to literature, to art, and to science. The saintly figure of Tolstoy, the charming personality of Madam Pavlova, and above all the genius of Ivan Pavlov caught my imagination and made me see in modern Russian group-culture an attempt to rise above the concrete to the abstract level. But I was sadly disappointed. The new economic doctrine of the Soviet is uninfluenced by the fine personalities mentioned above. I find

that in Communistic culture collective greed has taken the place of individual greed. As a recent writer on Communistic economics rightly points out, 'Communistic ideals can be realized only by stimulating the collective selfishness of the working class and its collective hatred of the property-owning class.' Can one ever get to a superior state of society based on cooperation, love and spirituality by appealing to collective selfishness and collective greed and collective hatred? The Communist has thoroughly misunderstood the structure and function of the human mind. He believes that the end of the good life is constant titillation of the sense organs. Instead of guiding the fierce sex, food-seeking, combative, acquisitive, and other animal propensities in man towards Para-Brahman, the Communist arrests the growth of human personality at the low level of concrete sentiments and allows it to regress to neurotic depths.

There is one invaluable act of service which Communism could have rendered, had it been inspired by spiritual ideals, and that is the annihilation of the acquisitive instinct. Whereas many of the other propensities may be ennobled, or spiritualized, or at least sublimated, this one, which has more of animality in it than even sex, resists all the finer influences of higher culture. So, it must be rooted out of the human mind and completely destroyed. The destruction of the sense of proprietary right over things and persons is the first condition of progress towards spiritual freedom. Communism could have achieved this freedom had it worked for the annihilation of the acquisitive propensity. Instead, it has only succeeded in stimulating the dread propensity of possessiveness under the cloak of abolishing private property. The worker or labourer is called upon to give up what little he has in order that he may enjoy a bigger share in what his neighbour has. Nationalization of land or the tools of production only means that every one is invited to enjoy what every one else has or is capable of producing and to have one's own acquisitive propensity

stimulated as often and as fiercely as one may desire. Communistic culture, therefore, is, in the true psychological sense, worse than other types of European culture. With his contempt for religion, his aversion for philosophy, and his impatience at healthy moral restraints, the Communist is pushing his nation down steadily to neurotic levels.

Recently, most damaging and at the same time most revealing charges have been brought against contemporary Russia by thinkers of outstanding merit. Bertrand Russell levels against Soviet Russia the charge of reverting to aggressive imperialism. Let me digress for a moment and draw your attention to the abolition of the Comintern. This master-stroke of diplomacy is not so innocent as it appears at first-sight. The Comintern is the bond maintaining the international character of the worker's organizations in Russia. Its abolition is the first step towards regression to narrow nationalism. The incident is in fact an indication of deep-seated collective selfishness, separativism, and collective greed in the Russian mind. Let me now quote Prof. Russell. 'I know' says the learned Professor, 'that many people deny altogether that the Soviet Government is imperialistic. They say that imperialism is an outcome of private capitalism, and since private capitalism has been abolished in Russia, there cannot be imperialism in that country. This argument is scholastic and *a priori*; the facts refute it. Russia has annexed Eastern Poland, and the Baltic provinces, has established subservient governments in Poland, Bulgaria, and Rumania, and is demanding Port Arthur, and half a share of the Chinese Eastern Railway. If this is not imperialism, what is it?

'This is not the end of Russia's ambitions. Ancient designs against Turkey and Persia are being revived. There are reasons for suspicion as to Russia's intentions in Eastern Germany', and I should add India is not beyond the pale of Russia's sinister intentions. Louis Fischer is much more outspoken than Prof. Russell. In a carefully written article

of very recent date this famous writer shows that grabbing of territories in Asia and Europe, forcible economic exploitation of the territories thus acquired by unholy means, opportunism and aggressiveness, the discarding of the sham cloak of internationalism and the shameless display of arrant nationalism are the motive forces in Russia's foreign policy. In the absence of the healthy checks which operate in democracy, Russia is steadily degenerating to primitive levels. This regression is specially noticeable in recent Russian literature and Russian art. The man of letters and the artist are forced to play to the gallery. Any attempt on their part to lift the masses above the level of vulgarity is immediately condemned as bourgeois. Nothing better, however, may be expected of a nation inspired by the earthy ideology of Marx, which in its turn draws its inspiration from anti-spiritual elements in the Hegelian dialectic. Of the noble, inspiring, and uplifting spiritual ideals we find no trace in Soviet art.

In spite of certain outstanding differences between them, the Communist and the Fascist are really first cousins. The cultures of Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan are unmistakable examples of regression, and like all such regressions in the past they are bound to perish in the near future. Russia should take a warning, before it is too late, from the fate of Germany and Japan.

To me it is an event charged with deep psychological significance that the National Congress has decided to expel Communism from its fold. The Congress has evidently been inspired by political motives, but our leaders have, without being aware of it consciously, effected a cultural purge of our national mind. The cultural future of the world undoubtedly rests with us. Sooner or later we have to assume leadership of the world. And it is in the fitness of things that the Para-Brahman-regard of our group-mind should throw off the dead weight of regressive materialistic Communism to rise higher and become fit for world leadership.

## XIX. DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

Among the Western peoples the democratic nations alone have risen above the concrete to the abstract sentiment level. The famous Kantian dictum that 'man is never to be treated as a means, but always as an end in himself', has received full support only in the democratic countries. The spirit of true liberty has flourished only inside democracy; the sanctity of personality and individuality has been cherished only by democratic countries. The literature and art, created by the gifted men and women of these countries, the social, commercial and governmental institutions organized by them, the philosophies which they have produced, and, above all, the dignified bearing of the humbler citizens of the democracies in their daily intercourse with their fellowmen bear evidence to the fact that the atmosphere of democracy is eminently suited to the development of the various mental powers in an equal measure and to the maintenance of a harmonious balance between them. Democracies aim at and excel in social virtues. We have noted that the German mind is oppressively scientific; the democratic mind on the other hand is delightfully shrewd and business-like. Above all, it is in its conception of the function of the *state* that democracy outshines other types of national organizations, and that conception was voiced forth in impressive terms by Jules Simon who, at the dawn of liberalism, proclaimed that *the state must labour to make itself unnecessary* and prepare the way for its own dismissal in proportion as the individual citizen realizes the full measure of his innate spirituality. That is the highest contribution which democracy has made to the unity of human civilization. I do not for a moment deny that democracies have fallen far short of their ideals and have blundered woefully in their dealings with the Asiatic and African peoples. That failure is the result of a deeper failure in their inner nature. The innate Western materialism of these nations is an ever-present menace to the full develop-

ment of their spirituality. Just now, the impact of Fascistic totalitarianism as well as Communistic totalitarianism is steadily extinguishing the fire of spirituality in them. The embers need to be fanned into a flame before they die out completely, and the breath that can blow on them and make the flaming tongue of spirituality leap out must come from the land which has hitched its hopes and ambitions and aspirations to Para-Brahman-regard. It is up to us, of this land, the inheritors of the purest type of Vedanta, to spiritualize democracy and make it fulfil its high destiny.

## XX. EGYPT AND IMMORTALITY

In our psycho-philosophical scale of values Egypt and China occupy a much higher place than all the countries of the West. The soul of Egyptian culture expresses itself in her struggle for spiritual immortality. The pyramids and the sphinx have been taken, quite legitimately, to the fullest outer expressions of the inner organization of the Egyptian group-mind. What do these ancient monuments represent? Scholars have puzzled their minds in vain over unnatural hypotheses bearing on these sacred structures. The pyramid is neither an astronomical edifice meant for taking observations, nor is it merely a tomb for the repose of the departed monarchs of the land. Paul Brunton has resolved the mystery of these colossal structures in his marvellous book *Search in Secret Egypt*. He, there, points out that the pyramid was built for the purpose of securing the very exacting environment demanded for the initiation ceremony—the *participation mystique*—in which the individual soul was made to realize its oneness with the divine soul. The Ancient Egyptians, too, had organized their sentiment values in much the same manner as the ancient Hindus of the upanishadic age. For both these mighty minds of old the supreme ideal in life was the realization, here and now, of the unity of the individual soul with the cosmic soul. Hence it is that we find the colossal pyramid and the Indian temple towering high over every

other monument and ending in an apex signifying the eternal aspiration of the self for union with the Godhead. The Sphinx too is not the puzzle-propounding monster, intent on devouring the unwary passersby, but the beneficent guardian-spirit welcoming the individual ripe for final initiation and keeping watch over the secret entrance to the participation chambers in the heart of the pyramid. I have not touched on the significant aspects of Egyptian art and architecture, and on the outstanding incidents in Egyptian history. But all of them point to the same passionate desire for immortality and for union with the Divine soul as the main spring of Egyptian culture. Truly may it be said that *tattvamasi* was the inspiring ideal of the culture that gave birth to sentiment values which were expressed outwardly in the colossal Egyptian pyramids on the one hand and the massive Indian temples on the other.

## XXI. CHINA AND ANCESTOR WORSHIP

China occupies in some senses a higher place in our scale of values, and in other respects a lower place, than Egypt. But in all respects she is superior to the Western nations. In regard to the organization of the lives of her sons and daughters on the political and social planes, China is superior to Egypt, but in matters touching the nature of pure spirit she seems to lag behind her African sister. The concept of the family, as we are aware, occupies a very peculiar place in Chinese life. It is not the concrete institution with quite real relationships subsisting between concrete individuals. It partakes more of the abstract, reaching out to post-mundane stages of ancestral existence, explicitly formulated in a definite cultural scheme. Hegel, in spite of his strong prejudice against Oriental cultures, is constrained to admit that 'the Chinese have a philosophy whose elementary principles are of great antiquity. The fundamental principle recognized is reason. They (the Chinese) believe that he who is acquainted with Reason possesses an instrument of universal power, which may be regarded as all-powerful, and



which confers supernatural might ; so that the possessor is enabled by it to exalt himself to heaven, and is not subject to death.' It is Lin Yutang, that strangely gifted Chinese writer, who combines in himself the best of what China and the West have to give to the world, who has coined a most attractive formula for Chinese culture. 'My formula for the Chinese national mind' says he, 'is  $R_4 I_1 H_3 S_2$  ; 4 grains of realism, 1 of idealism, 3 of humour and 3 of sensitivity.' And, in commenting on this formula, the Chinese scholar says, 'There are three religions of China, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, all magnificent systems in themselves, and yet robust common sense dilutes them all and reduces them all into the common problem of the pursuit of a happy human life. The mature Chinese is always a person who refuses to think too hard or to believe in any single idea or faith or school of philosophy wholeheartedly.' These observations of Lin Yutang are profoundly true, and that is the reason why I am inclined to rate ancient Chinese contribution to world culture slightly lower than the Egyptian. China is, however, bound to make a great contribution to the impending spiritual revival of Asiatic nations.

## XXII. INDIA AND PARA-BRAHMAN-REGARD

With China I have come, after many omissions, of course, to the end of my survey. India alone remains. Let me now sum up. I have taken you on a whirlwind tour, as it were, of the vast regions of world history. Sometimes I have taken you, hurricane-like, past mighty civilizations such as those of France, Spain, Arabia, America, and Australia, without permitting you to have even a passing glimpse of their contributions. At other times, I have halted for a while to let you see the high landmarks of national cultures. The beauty culture of Greece ; the genius for concrete organization, administration, and law of Rome ; the neurotic militarism of Germany ; the regressive acquisitiveness and collective

possessiveness and greed of the Soviet ; the fostering of individuality, of freedom and spirituality of democratic countries ; the struggle for immortality of Egypt ; and the ancestor-worship cult of the Chinese have all been noted, assessed, and given their due place in our scheme of cultural values. Each nation has something definite to contribute to the cultural unity of the world. Even those that are now set on the regressive path, such as Germany and Japan, have some elements of lasting value in their mental organization. Each nation has brought into existence some valuable sentiment scale. But those scales are in many instances quite antagonistic to one another. They are all governed, except in the case of the Asiatic nations, by self-regard. Now the most burning question of the present moment is how are these national cultures to be reconciled one with another and integrated in such a manner that each may make its most effective contribution to the final unity and peace of the human race. The psycho-philosophical formula framed by us shows how this result may be achieved. It has revealed to us the stages in the growth of the free, creative powers of the human mental structure, integrating the acquisitions of each level in turn, transcending them, and leading them finally to the divinely appointed goal of self-realization. Man is no longer to be viewed as a bundle of faculties. That was the fault of the nineteenth century psychology. Nor is human culture and its development to be interpreted in terms of dialectical logic, mechanistic biology, or positivistic sociology. That was the fault of Hegel, Spencer, and Comte. Man progresses by organizing himself first into social groups. Each such cultural group is an interlocked organization of individual feelings, thoughts, and actions, and all of them constitute a hierarchy from the lowest emotional level to the highest level of refined sentiments, and all of them are finally subordinate to the supreme master-sentiment of Para-Brahman-regard. Mankind have not reached this stage but are struggling at the next lower stage, groping

blindly towards final unity. Each nation has thought out its own contribution, and there must be a master-mind to think out the synthesis of all these contributions. It is here that India comes in as the resplendent queen of cultures and as the undisputed Empress in sole possession of that priceless cultural gem of purest ray serene, the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment. It is our nation with its national mind fostered in the age-long tradition of the spirit of the highest Vedanta, it is our country with its car of progress hitched to Para-Brahman, it is we in this land of highest spirituality, it is we alone who can point the way to unity and peace.

It used to be, and perhaps is still in many quarters, the fashion to ridicule us as pessimists, unworldly, and far too absorbed in abstract philosophical speculations to be effective leaders of the world. I put it to these critics of small understanding, can a pessimistic nation create the marvellous beauty of Ajanta and Ellora? Do the frescoes of Sittannavasal and Tanjore recently brought to light betray any trace of emaciated and dry intellectualism? Could the luscious cadences and passionate melodies of Carnatic music be produced by a nation whose heart has dried up? Is *bharata natya* the cultural expression of abstract and soulless philosophy? Are our temples, pulsating with social life, the centres of dry abstractionism? Is the ultra-refinement of our ladies in regard to their exquisite drapery, ornamentation, coiffure, and toilet extending down to the minutest details of manicuring, the outward expression of a culture lacking in appreciation of sensuous beauty? I can go on multiplying my examples without end. I am afraid that the critic who is blind to the true significance of these manifestations of aesthetic refinement is himself devoid of the aesthetic sense.

The contemplation of these outward signs of refinement and of our achievements in the

exceedingly mundane realms of *artha* and *kama* should not result in a self-complacent tendency to pat ourselves on our back and to go to sleep on our ancient laurels. India is in a state of dangerous transition. The impact of Western culture, particularly of the near West, on our hoary heritage is rather unsettling. The Para-Brahman of Vedanta is sought to be displaced by the clay-footed gods imported from regions not far removed from our country. We must guard steadily against this ever-present danger to our national culture. Without losing our hold on Para-Brahman and without giving up our hard-won achievements in the literary, social, aesthetic, and moral realms, we have to assimilate the contributions of Western positive science and evolve a perfect unity of the spiritual and material elements in world culture. With a scale of sentiment values, wherein the various elements of lasting value in Western culture are fused harmoniously into a well-knit whole and are leavened and vivified by the spirit of the highest Vedanta, we shall be in a position to lead the whole world. But, we have got to assimilate this scale first; we have got to live it in our lives; and by our example infect the whole world with a passionate desire for realizing Para-Brahman. Para-Brahman-regard, then, is indicated as the goal of the historic process. The one increasing purpose running through the ages is none other than the ever-increasing realization of Para-Brahman in the cultural evolution of the human race. And the onerous responsibility of rousing up the slumbering spirituality of the world and of guiding the historic process aright rests on us, the citizens of this ancient land of eternal spirituality. That is the lesson that I have learnt from a philosophical study of the history of the world, and that is the conclusion that I wish to commend most earnestly to you for your serious consideration and acceptance.

(Concluded)

## JOSEPHINE MACLEOD OR TANTINE

On Friday 14 October 1949 Miss Josephine MacLeod, affectionately known as Tantine to the Ramakrishna brotherhood, passed away peacefully in Los Angeles, South California, USA. The following day the sad news was received at the Belurmath through a cable. She was nearly ninety when she died.

The death of Tantine removes an inspiring figure and an important landmark in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. The loss will be widely felt and grieved. She meant so much to so many for so long.

We have not received, at the time of writing, details of her last days; they will come in time and will doubtless make a glorious finale to her long life of purity, love, and dedication to the cause of Swami Vivekananda. They will form part of a fuller account of her life, her relations with Swamiji and his Order, her numerous services to India, which will be published in these pages in due time.

Miss J. MacLeod formed for long a most vivid link with Swami Vivekananda. Though she disclaimed formal discipleship, she was full of Swamiji all her life and consistently served his cause with remarkable loyalty and devotion. Friend or *guru*, Swamiji, from the day she first met him, filled her life in a way as nothing else did. Perhaps according to her ideas and the ideas of her society, friendship means much more than *guruhood*, a relation of the most intimate character. This is what she says of her first meeting with Swamiji and what he meant to her since then. This quotation and the other are from her unpublished reminiscences of Swamiji, a document as inspiring as profound meditation, and which will be published in full next month. Says she :

'On the twentieth of January, 1895, I went with my sister to 54 West 33rd Street, New York, and heard the Swami Vivekananda in his own sitting room where were assembled, fifteen or twenty ladies and two or three gentlemen. The room was crowded. All the arm

chairs were taken so I sat on the floor in the front row. Swami stood in the corner. He said something, the particular words of which I do not remember, but instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth. From that moment life had a different import. It was as if he made you realize that you were in eternity. It never altered. It never grew. It was like the sun that you will never forget once you have seen.'

What more can discipleship mean?

She was in touch with Swamiji for seven years and helped him in numerous ways in his mission to the West. The Swami has referred to her services in glowing words and ever remained grateful for them. Some of the Swami's most inspiring and magnificent letters were written her. One such is the famous letter dated the 18th April 1900, from Alameda, California, where the great Vedantin talks so movingly of his extreme detachment, of peace and calm and retirement from work. The Joe-Joe of the letters is Miss MacLeod. A further glimpse of Swamiji's relation with her is provided by the poem which he wrote to her, while in the West. The poem, published in *Prabuddha Bharata* in October 1948, is given below.

The poem was superscribed *To My Own Soul* and handed personally to Tantine at Ridgley Manor, New York, 1899.

Hold yet a while, Strong Heart,  
Not part a life-long yoke  
Though blighted looks the present, future  
gloom.

An age it seems since you and I began our  
March up hill or down. Sailing smooth o'er  
Seas that are so rare—

Thou nearer unto me, than oft-times  
I myself—

Proclaiming mental moves before they were!  
Reflector true—Thy pulse so timed to mine,

Thou perfect note of thoughts, however  
fine—

Shall we now part, Recorder, say ?

In thee is friendship, faith,

For thou didst warn when evil thoughts  
were brewing—

And though, alas, thy warning thrown away,

Went on the same as ever—good and true.

She was one of those who engaged the services of Mr. Goodwin for taking down Swamiji's lecture in the West. She records :

'Mr. Goodwin was the stenographer who had been engaged at 54 West 33rd Street to take down the lectures of Swami Vivekananda. Mr. Goodwin was a court-stenographer, which means two hundred words a minute and he was very expensive ; but as we did not want to lose any of Vivekananda's words we engaged him. After the first week Mr. Goodwin refused any money and when they said to him : "What do you mean ?", he said : "If Vivekananda gives his life, the least I can do is to give my service". He followed Swami around the world and we have seven volumes hot from his lips that Mr. Goodwin took down.'

Her sister Mrs Legget was married to a wealthy New York businessman, but marriage for her became unthinkable after she had met Swamiji. She did not have large means for many years. Still she saved eight hundred dollars over a period of several years which she gave away to Swamiji. The first *Udbodhan* press was bought with this money by Swami Trigunatita.

Later when her means were improved she gave large sums periodically for helping the Math and Mission in numerous ways. Her services in other directions were, perhaps, from wider standpoints, still more valuable and will be for ever remembered with gratefulness.

Tantine loved India because India was Swamiji's. Her attitude towards her was one of consistent constructive help without criticism. It was formed before her first visit

to the country. She had written to Swamiji before coming here for the first time, 'Shall I come to India ?' And his answer was : "Yes, come, if you want filth and degradation and poverty and many loin cloths talking religion. Don't come if you want anything else. We cannot bear one more criticism."

She never forgot this and she would talk of it frequently to young members of the Order. On her arrival in India she made a casual remark about Alasinga's Vaishnavite marks on the forehead. This did not mean any deprecation or criticism. But Swamiji did not let this pass unnoticed, and so this, forever, fixed her attitude. The incident, in Tantine's own words, is as follows :

'We arrived in Bombay on the twelfth of February where Mr. Alasinga met us, who wore the vertical red marks of the Vaishnavite sect. Later on, once when I was sitting with Swami on our way to Kashmir, I happened to make the remark : "What a pity that Mr. Alasinga wears those Vaishnavite marks on his forehead !" Instantly Swami turned and said with great sternness : "Hands off ! What have you ever done ?" I did not know what I had done then. Of course I never answered. Tears came to my eyes and I waited. I learned later that Mr. Alasinga Perumal was a young Brahmin teaching philosophy in a college in Madras earning 100 rupees a month, supporting his father, mother, wife and four children, and who had gone from door to door to beg the money to send Vivekananda to the West. Perhaps without him we never would have met Vivekananda. Then one understood the anger with which Swamiji met the slightest attack on Mr. Alasinga.'

She was in Europe when Swamiji passed away. She was informed by a cable. She says of this :

'They cabled me on the fourth of July : "Swami attained Nirvana." For days I was stunned. I never answered it. And then the desolation that seemed to fill my life made me weep for years and it was only after I read

Maeterlinck who said: "If you have been greatly influenced by anyone, prove it in your life, and not by your tears", I never wept again; but went back to America and tried to follow the traces of where he had lived. I went to Thousand Island Park and became the guest of Miss Dutcher to whom the cottage belonged, who gave me the same room that Swami had used.

'Fourteen years elapsed before I returned to India. Then I went accompanying Professor and Mrs. Geddes. I then found, instead of India being a place of desolation, all India was alive with Swamiji's ideas, with half a dozen monasteries, thousands of centres, hundreds of societies. Since that time I have been going frequently. They like to have me at the monastery guest house because I keep the Vivekananda alive, as none of these young men have ever seen him. And I like to be in India, remembering once when I asked him, "Swamiji, how can I best help you?" his answer was, "Love India!" So the upper floor of the guest house at the monastery is mine where I go and will probably go winters, until the end.'

The above few moving words tell better

than all which can be said by others, however eloquently, her relation with Swamiji, her attitude to India and her estimate of Swamiji's influence on India.

Tantine truly recalled something of Swamiji's spirit vividly to all those who met her. Because of her love of Swamiji the monastic members felt her as one of them, and this was remarkable in those days when so much stood between a correct understanding of East and West. She was always self-reliant and retained wonderful vigour till her extreme old age. She always left upon one the impression that she was full of Swamiji and that she always tried her best to radiate Swamiji's strength, love, and purity to all who came in contact with her. She came to India for the last time before the last war and though she hoped to come again, age and other things prevented it. But in America she continued till her end to be a source of great inspiration and help to the Swamis of the Vedanta Centres in that country.

An inspiring life of purity, love and service has come to a quiet close, but her memory will ever remain green wherever Swami Vivekananda will be read and loved.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

*Nature of Man and Religious Disciplines* by Dr Taraknath Das of the Columbia University of New York is an address delivered in connection with a series of lectures on the *Nature of Man*, held recently under the auspices of World Alliance for International Friendship through Religions in New York.

### POWER IN MODERN SOCIETY

The problem of power has assumed a most sinister aspect in the modern world. The feeling is widespread among thinkers in the

West that power today constitutes the greatest threat to peace and civilization. Technical advances and vast organizations made possible by them, have placed tremendous power in the hands of a few individuals. It is this concentration of power which is feared, since it depends on the whims or fancies of a few individuals at the top to start destructive action on a colossal scale.

In a recent series of broadcast from the BBC Dr Alex Confort emphasized the above point in particular. Said he: "The forces in nature which threaten humanity, such as disease and bad weather, are not the threats

which worry us most today. If this is the Age of Anxiety, that anxiety is over the problem of power. In the first place, unless we achieve some very rapid changes in the pattern of political society, more of you may be killed by war than by physical disease. In the second place, the one factor which could seriously delay, and perhaps prevent altogether, the extension of scientific knowledge, would be a further growth in our society of military barbarism, of the permanent war economy, with its secrecy, its witch hunts, and its hysterical and destructive attitudes.'

The speaker's thesis is that a centralized urban society is incapable of fulfilling the assumptions which democracy makes. 'Power and order, or power and sociality, are not, in this context, compatible. ... The centralization of power, and the enormous consequences of individual decisions in a modern state, impose a strain on the adjustment and the judgment of the individuals in office which they cannot carry. ... Not only does power attract abnormals, but no man is sufficiently normal to be safely entrusted with the degree of power which exists today, either as a tyrant, an expert, or a delegate. And a fool or a lunatic in office spells disaster'.

It is true, as the speaker says, that modern politics attract abnormal individuals whose only aim is to dominate over others and who do not possess special abilities in other fields. Psychopaths of this type do really spell disaster. Recent fascist states have given ample evidence of this, but they are not peculiar in this respect, since the same thing is prevalent in a less obvious form in other modern governments as well. Modern politics is largely a game of power; its true function is hardly ever realized by the vast majority of those involved in it. Still, the desire for power is, we believe, common to all men. The psychology is one of search for security. We shall therefore never satisfactorily solve the problem of power unless we can find out a true answer to the question of security and fulfilment.

How deep-seated is the attraction of power for individuals and how dangerous are the consequences of the pursuit of power as an end can be seen from the warning given by the Scriptures to aspirants against spiritual varieties of them. By the pursuit of power we not only miss the true and higher goal of life, the goal which alone can give us permanent security and ultimate satisfaction, but also lose in the end the very power we pursue, since beyond a point such pursuits become self-refuting. There is something in the structure of the universe which will cast down a man who thinks he is lord of the universe. Such 'cosmic impiety' never goes unpunished.

Further, an Oriental cannot but be reminded of another thing by such discussions. The power philosophy, by which we mean a scheme of life that makes power an absolute end, has dominated the West for over two hundred years, during which the rest of the world was trampled upon by it. What this has meant to vast sections of humanity in terms of suffering and degradation is too patent today. Now that the time-process has laid bare the self-refuting character of this philosophy, the West is seeking a new philosophy of 'sociality'. We think the West is less secure today than the East. It is the contribution of their secular ideology. Scientists in the last century proclaimed that they would gradually bring heaven on earth. Today many of them are tame experts employed by their political bosses to manufacture arms which may wipe out humanity from it. Yesterday many of them had ridicule for religions and would put themselves on a level higher than that of saints and prophets. Today their rationality cannot prevent them from prostituting their knowledge for immoral ends. It is clear science is secondary and cannot help us in matters which are of utmost importance to life.

How can power be limited? There are obviously two ways, institutional and individual. One is reformation of society, the other is reformation of the individual. A

decentralized democratic society is a question of long-term planning and will not, further, be achieved except on a worldwide basis, through renunciation of national and group sovereignties and construction of a world-order. Modern industrial operations have knit the world together; these demand an appropriate political structure. Isolation is unthinkable unless we are all bent upon reversing the forces of world economy. But that will be merely temporary and will not be progressive. A society in the modern world is not able to solve its problems in isolation, and and it will react to the threat of centralized power outside by trying to develop similar power within itself. Meanwhile how are we to escape from this circular movement of violence and counter-violence, power and insecurity. Dr. Confort, with whose religious views we do not agree, suggests an 'individual' way out of it. 'But for us,' he says 'as individuals, the immediate defence against official delinquency lies in our own action. . . . There is one revolution we can all produce at once, in the privacy of our houses. We may not be able to prevent atrocities by other people but we can at least decline to commit them ourselves.'

This is, of course, a resounding platitude. Though 'rational' scientists talk like that, in action they seem powerless against tyrannical forces. Consider the case of the tame experts mentioned above.

Still we believe the individual way is the fundamental way. There cannot be enough inspiration for overcoming the temptations of power from a mere social aim. A Vedantin will say that the desire for power cannot be finally overcome by worldly aims. He will say all our worldly aims, and not the pursuit of power alone, are pathological, if they do not allow us to go beyond them. All these cravings arise in a very deep sense from a feeling of frustration. Because we have no conception of the true aim of man and want to stabilize human development at our own levels, we are making, and bound to make, wrong use of science, technology, and organization. We do not say institutional changes or technical progress are not necessary. They are necessary and inevitable, but we need a right aim to to make a right use of them. And if the aim is to be more than a mere sentiment which appeals only for rhetorical reasons it must be grounded in an objective truth that is verifiable by experience. Vedanta offers this basis.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**GIRISH GHOSE AND HIS DRAMAS.** By SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA. Published by The Book House, 15 College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 162. Price Rs. 3/-

This is an outline of the life and work of one of the most extraordinary personalities the world has produced in the last century. Girish Ghose, the master poet-dramatist of Bengal, was a man of most varied and apparently contradictory experiences in the world. Commanding respect and admiration from the great ones in all fields, from East and West alike, he was, as the author puts it, '.... a curious combination of contradictory qualities. He was indifferent and assuming, life and energetic, patient and impatient, brave and cowardly, proud and humble, furious and forgiving, discriminating and sentimental, showy and modest, believing and doubting, religious and worldly, godly

and demonic, passionate and dispassionate, equally moved by good and evil, fond of self-effort and at the same time dependent on divine grace....' (p. 11).

He was undoubtedly a versatile genius, for his productions as well as his representations are fascinating. His unmatched power of reproducing characters was the result of a deep knowledge of human psychology, intuitive and experienced.

A great part of the book is dedicated to a lucid comparative study of Ghose's personality and work, and of those of the very greatest in the world's literary sphere. Shakespeare, Goethe, and other giants of this calibre are elaborately dealt with. In comparing Ghose's works with those of some Western masters of the pen, the author goes, however, too far. The rating of Ghose's buffoons—masterpieces though they certainly

are—over the Shakerpearean ones seems to us a bit improper and also anachronistic—almost four centuries lie between these two. We wonder whether Elizabethan audiences would have appreciated the nineteenth century buffoonery. Further, the author deplores some of his Western colleagues for dwelling on the corrupt and immoral ways and social habits of their countries in a naturalistic manner. Crude though these depictions may seem, their creators definitely meant to exhibit them as a deterrent—we do not surmise that Ibsen meant to propagandize incest in his *Ghosts* (p. 52).

The magical transformation of the atheist into a profound mystic, as a sequel to his contact with the Saunt of Dakshineswar, finds an able description in this volume.

Another wondrous fact is the almost incredible productivity of Ghose. Seven hundred characters, all of them unique and unlike, range from the prostitute to the prophet in his eighty dramas. Nearly a thousand songs have been written by Ghose. Besides, he has rendered Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Bengali in a masterful way and has also displayed his erudition in many other fields. Ghose's best dramas *Vikramangal* and *Tapabal* have been dealt with *in extenso*.

An appendix gives us valuable clues of a comparative and more general kind closely connected with the subject of this book. R.

**PUBLIC FINANCE AND OUR POVERTY.** By J. C. KUMARAPPA. *Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.* Pp. 112. Price Rs. 1/8.

Even a layman knows that prosperous conditions prevailed in India till the very recent past. He hears them related by older people and he discovers that the more he goes into the past, the more prosperous he finds India, and if the man is sufficiently old he realizes how the conditions of living have deteriorated even in his own life-time. He only sees the result but does not know why it is so. A man with some knowledge of history knows that this process of deterioration started with the beginning of the consolidation of British rule in India about two centuries ago and has been ever after progressively worsening. But he also does not know in any clear way how this ruin has been wrought. He only finds that the gay and prosperous India found in the literature of the past has vanished. It is because the ways of exploitation employed by the British are subtle and only a keen economist can dive into the secret and lay the facts bare.

And in J. C. Kumarappa we have such an economist. In this book he traces the progressive economic decline of India during the British rule with facts, figures, and quotations from reliable authorities, mostly Europeans. He shows that the ways of public finance are subtle and mysterious. It covers its real nature under a heap of confusing figures and technical terminology. The majority do not understand what is the exact effect of a financial

policy on the living conditions in the country. A coloured paper may be put in our hand dispossessing us of the very means of subsistence without our being aware of it. It is incredible, and yet that is what has taken place. The creation of the Sterling Securities is a case in point, which is a direct cause of the enormous inflation in the country and the consequent hardships that we are experiencing at present. We have got paper money with which we cannot buy what we want. The author discusses in detail many such points which arise out of the policy of Public Finance adopted by the British India Government under the heads: 'Public Expenditure', 'Public Revenue', 'Public Debts', 'Sterling Credits', etc., bearing on the poverty of India.

**EDUCATION IN MODERN INDIA.** By ANATH BASU. *Published by Orient Book Co., Calcutta 12.* Pp. 184. Price Rs. 4/-.

The problem of a thorough overhauling of the educational system is worrying our statesmen and educationists. But it seems, while there is no dearth of plans and schemes, commissions and reports, nothing happens. However, the need for good planning is real. And Mr Basu's book is a brief, lucid, and critical exposition of the main ideas about educational reconstruction of India. It also describes the earlier educational policies. Mr Basu advocates a national system of education. His ideas are broad and practical. We agree with him that religious instruction is difficult to impart in schools because of the differences in religion which, if reduced to the greatest common measure, yields but an abstract philosophy. But we have one remark to make. He himself speaks of making the students aware of our cultural heritage. But how can they be aware of it if they do not read religious literature, the repository of Indian culture? We hold that any Indian, whatever his religion, should have a rudimentary knowledge of the principal *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Epics* and *Smritis* in order to qualify himself as educated. Is it possible for anybody to understand the West without reading the *Bible*? We believe portions from our religious classics (in translations) should be included in the school syllabus and taught as literature and cultural history. We do not believe that any non-Hindu will rationally object to it on religious grounds. Nobody objected to selections from the *Bible* being included in the college course of the Calcutta University.

P. J. Chaudhury

**INVOCATION AND OTHER POEMS.** By H. K. CHALLONER. *Published by the author, Westlands, Beckley, Sussex, England.* Price 3/6d.

It is very rare that one now comes across poetry that acts like charm or incantation, or poetry that is inspiration and power. Modern English poetry is becoming more and more intellectualized. Strident unintelligibility is one of its characteristic features and



the poets are given to glorying over their power of clustering together dissociated images with syncopated or jazz music or no music at all. Mr Challoner's verses remind us once more that poetry is born of divine afflatus and that it can sing in tunes that appeal more to the spiritual sense of man than act as incentives to his intellectual perversities. Mr Challoner has both originality and the power of absorbing and assimilating new wisdom for the West. His small book consisting of forty-five poems is a remarkable production from the point of view of metrical harmony and vision, just the two elements that modern poetry in general lacks. He reminds us in places of A.E. (George Russell) and Yeats. His inspiration has both Celtic and Hindu strands. To mention only a few, poems like 'Reincarnation', 'The Great Play', 'Before an Image of the Buddha', 'Ancient Wisdom' or 'Initiation' have not only charm and lucidity but great spiritual insight. Though he may lack the master's touch in everything that he writes, the majority of his poems in this book are distinguished on the whole for their plasticity of technique, clarity of image and quiet affirmative spiritual strength of a kind which is an enigma to those who are brought up entirely on orthodox Christian traditions.

D. M.

**NATIONAL FOOD PLANNING.** By L. RAMACHANDRA SARMA. *Published by The Nature Cure Publishing House Ltd., Pudukkottai, S. I. Ry. Pp. 42. Price Rs. 12/-.*

Shri Ramachandra Sarma points out in this little booklet that food for all is equivalent to health for all. He has dealt with the problem of food, giving appropriate quotations and many instructive tables and statistics showing the food condition in India both as regards quantity and quality as also the nutritive value of the various kinds of food. Stress is laid on the necessity of food that suffices not only in quantity, but in quality as well; food which fills the stomach daily can cause havoc to the system unless it contains the essential nutriments. In order to achieve a sound state of affairs in feeding the people, the enhancement of fruits and vegetable-growing schemes as well as the increase of milk-production must be aimed at. The author has given a very sound plan which should certainly be considered by the competent authorities.

**HOUD OF THE HEART.** By GURDIAL MALLIK. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Price Rs. 3/-.*

This is a volume of devotional and mystic poems, translated from the original Hindusthani songs composed by Mr Mallik. We agree with the poet that its essential weakness is the absence of music. There is little reason to doubt the sincerity and spontaneity of these poems, but they are a little too reminiscent of Tagore, e.g. 'Today the Divine Beloved has come to my door', 'Thy door is ever open, O Lord', and 'I am

sitting outside the door of Thy temple,' etc. So many 'admirers' of Gurudev have taken the hackneyed path of imitation without a spark of feeling that there is real danger of Mr Mallik being classed among them, unless he publishes the Hindusthani originals and sets them to music. Only thus can he avoid the crude mixture of unpoetic words and familiar slang that often crops up in the English version, as in: 'the five elements have hatched a conspiracy and they cause me any amount of harassment', 'the three qualities have kicked up a continuous row.'

A. V. R.

**HINDU FASTS AND FESTIVALS AND THEIR PHILOSOPHY.** By SWAMI SIVANANDA. *Published by The Sivananda Publication League, Rishikesh. Pp. 158. Price Rs. 3/4.*

Fasts and Festivals play an important part in the life of an average Hindu. They date from very ancient times and their number has grown very large in course of time. The author has brought together some of the important ones in this book and has given a brief account showing their origin and significance. He has treated the subject under classified heads such as Festivals, Jayantis, Vratas for Ladies, Melas, and Special Observance, arranging them in an alphabetical order.

#### BENGALI

**DIVYA-JIVAN, PART I.** By SRI AUROBINDO. *TRANSLATED BY ANIRVAN. Arya Publishing House, 63 College Street, Calcutta 12. Pp. 344. Price Rs. 8/-.*

This is the Bengali translation of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* which needs no introduction to the thoughtful. It is a great message from a great sage, full of large utterance and high thinking befitting a great thinker and our modern thought-tortured culture. The Vedic age of wonder and child-like simplicity and the mediæval age of unreasoned saints is past; this is the age of sophistication, of symbolic logic, positivism, and secular state, of all kinds of cults and faiths, rituals of grips and passwords and, above all, of doubts and dilemmas. A modern saint has to appeal to us in a phraseology that is drawn from the diverse disciplines of man and is so rich in meanings and suggestions, much of which remains vague as music. Terms defined in a particular discipline and stretched beyond their elastic limits give overtones of meaning. Thus we have such words as force, energy, magnetism, mutation, transformation, evolution, and others. Sometimes a whole argument rests on a concept which is but a metaphor and whose objective reference is hard to find. This is the inevitable consequence of thought and language attempting to probe into metaphysical depths. Sri Aurobindo is a thinker with a vision but still he is a thinker addressing the intellect of man. And so far as he is original his phrases dazzle no less than they illumine.

The book is perplexing to those reared in our traditional religious ideas. Our ideas of world, soul, God,

body, mind, Yoga and liberation get shaken and until we attain a new coherence we feel miserable in our state of doubt. And most of us do not attain this new harmony after the old one is disturbed. But there is an integral vision underlying the work, and those few who can grasp it get ample reward for their labours. It is not Sri Aurobindo's arguments that convince but his deep tone and quiet power that evokes in us a mood in which we see and believe much that we understand not. His arguments are mostly rhetorical. For example, the argument that we will have another far more developed body and mind from the fact of our past development and of mutations observed in biology, is analogical, and its force is psychological rather than logical. It is like arguing (as some popularizers of science have done and have been fully exposed) that we have a fourth dimension of space because we have already three! To believe in Sri Aurobindo's thesis that our body will transform and God will descend in us and that matter is not an illusion but is cognate with ultimate reality is purely a metaphysical choice between many alternatives. There can be no *a priori* proof, nor a proof from common experience or science. He has given us a theoretical basis for a psycho-physical experiment he and his disciples are performing. Before the results of that experiment are out, what a traditionalist will ask is this: Is the new metaphysical scheme (a new interpretation of the *Vedas*) simpler and closer to the revealed texts than its rivals? The readers will judge it themselves. For us it is difficult to give up Shankara and Patanjali though the new scheme has got its own peculiar charm

and modernistic appeal. The issue between the Vedantic approach and the newer one is sharp and of fundamental importance to modern Indian thought and culture. No future philosophy of religion can bypass *Life Divine*.

And no thinking soul can afford to ignore it. For it is a masterpiece of our time, rich in profound thoughts and sublime moods. In spite of a certain haze about the meaning the reader is invariably moved by the inspired tone of the writing and is lifted into a bracing atmosphere where ultimate truths appear not as forbidden mysteries. The Bengali translation, which itself is a great achievement of vast scholarship, has reproduced that effect, though it could not avoid a few apparent jargons and incessant inversions. The book is not meant for the common reader and simple, pious souls. It may do them more harm than good. It is for the brave adventurers in ideas who have not been able themselves to find out satisfactory answers to their searching questions of life in our traditional religio-philosophical literature.

P. J. Chaudhury

YOGA-CHATUSHTAYA. BY SWAMI SUNDARANANDA. Published by Udbodhan Karyalaya, Baghbar, Calcutta. Pp. 136. Price Rs. 2/-.

This is a reliable introduction to the four kinds of Yoga: Bhakti, Raja, Karma, and Jnana. The author has made full use of his erudition and has based his exposition on copious quotations from authorities both classical and modern. He shows capacity for analysis as well as of synthesis. The exposition is lucid.

P. J. Chaudhury

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME

REPORT FOR 1948

The Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home started in a small way in 1916 and affiliated to the Mission in 1919, has grown into a large and beneficent institution rendering a rare service to the country. Its aim is not only to help poor and meritorious students through college education, but more important still, to supply to its inmates the vital elements which the present system of education even now fails to give. In a word it tries to develop its inmates into rounded personalities. Modern Indian education which arose chiefly with the object of training up a personnel for serving British administrative needs completely lacks this aspect. The idea of education as a means to the development of personality and as designed primarily to conserve the true values of the culture of a society it is intended to serve finds no place in it. Its disastrous effects are too plain today to observing minds to need mention.

Swami Vivekananda suggested the broad maxims

according to which our education should be reconstructed. He pointed out that the ancient ideals of the Gurukula system had value for all times and that they should be combined with the new knowledge which gave us understanding of nature and power over it. The institution was started with this inspiration and has been serving the basic aim of education in a humble way. This it does by giving a moral and spiritual background to the college education that the boys receive in the academic institutions.

The important features of the Home are the following: It is run by competent monks of the Order. Licensed by the Calcutta University it is intended specially for poor and meritorious matriculates who are helped through their college course with free board, lodging, books and other necessities as far as possible. Systematic efforts are made to supplement the academic education of the University with the training necessary to develop character and efficiency among its inmates. Needy meritorious youths get here an opportunity of receiving secular as well as spiritual education under

the care and guidance of Hindu Sanyasins so that they may become real men, efficient and willing to rehabilitate their own families and also to do their best towards the uplift of the country. The students do all the work except cooking and learn to combine simple living with high thinking. No distinction is made between paying and non-paying boarders. The students are acquainted with the fundamentals of their culture through classes, talks, festivals and regular prayer, worship etc. A manuscript magazine is edited and conducted by the students.

The success that the Home, considering its size, has achieved in its efforts is phenomenal. Many distinguished visitors interested in the education of our young men have recognized the Home as a much-needed educational institution of unique value.

The Home is at present located at 20 Harinath De Road, Calcutta, and it further maintains another establishment in a garden house at Seclapur. Efforts are being made to acquire a suitable suburban area for permanently establishing the Home there.

At the beginning of this year there were altogether 49 students of whom 24 were free, 13 concession-holders and 12 paying. During the year 20 students left the Home and 19 students were admitted. Thus at the end of the year there were 48 students, of whom 26 were free, 19 concession-holders and 13 paying.

During 1948 four students appeared for B. Sc, six for B.A., 5 for I.Sc. and 2 I.A., all of whom passed except one in B.A. In B.Sc. one passed with 2nd class Hons. in Chemistry and one with distinction; in B.A. one with 2nd class Hons. in Economics; in I.Sc. all passed in the 1st division, one standing fourth in order of merit and securing a Govt. scholarship; and in I.A. one in the 1st division and one in the 2nd division.

Rs. 260/- were spent during the year by way of monthly stipends to six students at a time, for needy and deserving college students residing outside the Students' Home. Rs. 820/- were given by way of help for examination fees.

The manuscript magazine *Viduarthi* was conducted by the students. Saturday classes and occasional debates were held when the students met to discuss socio-religious topics. In addition religious classes and celebrations also were held.

A Library containing more than 1550 well-chosen books on various subjects afforded the students facilities for extending their study beyond their college curriculum. 490 books were issued during the year. Besides, from the text-book section of the Library 1269 books were lent to the inmates.

The ex-students of the Home also conducted a magazine *Praktani* for distribution among all ex-students and present students. They also held as usual the *Nava Varsha Sammelan* and *Vijaya Sammelan*.

The present monthly subscription strength requires to be increased at least by Rs. 100/- to meet the running

expenses. Those who feel interest in this work are requested to help the Home by paying their mite in the form of regular subscription or donation. An endowment of 3% G.P. Notes of the face-value of Rs. 10,000/- that will go to maintain and educate one free student at a time may be made in the name of any of the donor's living or departed relatives. Besides, the Home needs funds for the proposed new building for the Students' Home.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, or by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 20 Harinath De Road, Calcutta 9.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL, HARDWAR

#### REPORT FOR 1948

This Sevashrama which was started early in 1901 in a small hut, under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, to serve the people who flock to Hardwar from all parts of India and fall victims to diseases there, has now developed into a fully-equipped Hospital with 50 beds from small beginnings. It also does immense service to pilgrims who gather in lacs during the Kumbhamela held in Hardwar once in 12 years.

The following is a brief report of its various activities during 1948.

During the period under review the Sevashrama had to work under great strain both on account of the rush of patients due to the influx of refugees from the West Punjab and N.W.F.P., and, financially, due to the extra patients and all-round increase in prices. The Sevashrama, however, could tide over the difficulty thanks to the support from the generous public and Government help.

**Hospital:** The total number of cases treated during the year was 88,857 as against 75,621 in 1947. The daily average attendance for the year in the Indoor and Outdoor departments of the Hospital rose to 240.

Patients in the Indoor and Outdoor Departments include pilgrims from all the provinces of India, in addition to the inhabitants in and around the locality. Diet, medicine, nursing and treatment under qualified doctors are provided free and without distinction of caste, creed, or community.

**Medical Relief for Refugees:** The medical relief work for refugees which was started in May 1947 was continued throughout the year 1948. In the Indoor Hospital 138 serious cases were admitted and treated, and as many as 54,712 patients attended the Outdoor Department. Many deserving cases were given barley powder, woollen blankets and also some help in cash in addition to medicines. Even now Hardwar and its neighbourhood have a population of more than 30,000 refugees, and this necessitates continuation of the relief work.

**Night School:** The Night School for Harijan boys functioned as usual at the beginning of the year, but

as the local Municipal Board is taking steps for compulsory Primary Education, the number of students went down considerably towards the end of the year.

**Library:** There were 3771 books in the Ashrama and the Patients' Libraries. Both the Libraries were well utilized, the number of books issued during the year being 3238.

**Feeding of Dur'danarayan:** About sixteen hundred persons, mostly Harijans, were entertained with food during the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

**Finance:** Income for the year under General Fund was Rs. 50,753-4-3 and expenditure Rs. 52,235-14-10, leaving a deficit of Rs. 1,532-10-7. Under the Building Fund and Special Funds, the income came to Rs. 2,005-0-0 and Rs. 19,253-14-0 respectively, and expenditure under these two heads was Rs. 2,670-15-11 and Rs. 4,961-1-3 respectively.

**Thanks:** The Sevashrama takes this opportunity of offering its grateful thanks to all donors, subscribers, and friends who have helped the institution in various ways.

**Needs:** The important needs of the Sevashrama are:

	Rs.
1. Underground drainage with improved Sanitary arrangements ..	85,000
2. One Cow Shed (Goshala) estimated to cost Rs. 22,000 ..	10,000
3. A Kitchen Block with store room and dining hall ..	15,000
4. Doctors' Quarters ..	15,000
5. Electric Motor Pump with overhead tank for the main well ..	12,000
6. Twenty additional beds with necessary equipments ..	6,000
7. Pantry, Bedding and Linen Room for patients ..	5,000
8. Thirty-three beds in the Indoor Hospital have not yet been endowed, and the cost of endowing a bed is Rs. 8,000. Beds may be endowed in memory of near and dear ones.	

In addition to these, the immediate need of the Sevashrama is for funds for its day-to-day expenses. Due to the enormous rise in prices of foodstuffs and hospital requisites, side by side with the increase in wages and salaries, the cost of maintenance of the hospital is shooting up year after year. The volume of work also is expanding. The Sevashrama therefore requires at least Rs. 50,000 to carry on its normal activities.

**Purna Kumbha Mela at Hardwar in April 1950:** The famous Purna Kumbha Mela held at Hardwar once in 12 years will take place this time in 1950 in March and April. A congregation of 10 to 12 lacs of pilgrims is expected as usual.

Over and above its normal activities, the Sevashrama has been organizing Special Medical Relief Work during

these Melas. Both men and money are required to carry out the relief work successfully. An expenditure of Rs. 25,000 is estimated for this purpose. The success of the work depends upon the generous public and the Sevashrama hopes that they will extend their helping hand for this humanitarian cause. Contributions for this purpose may be specified accordingly.

Contributions for any of the above purposes may be sent to one of the following addresses:

1. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah Dist., (West Bengal).
2. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal P.O., Saharanpur Dist., U.P.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, VRINDABAN

#### REPORT FOR 1948

Established in the year 1907 in holy Vrindavan, this institution has constantly aimed at realizing the great spiritual ideal preached by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda—the ideal of worshipping the Divine in the suffering humanity. From a very modest beginning the Sevashrama has now grown into an up-to-date hospital with 55 beds, and is furnished with many modern equipments.

Relief is given to the suffering humanity without any distinction of caste, creed or religion. Services are therefore available to the public in general but the poor in particular, free of all charges.

The following is a brief report of its activities during the year:

**Indoor General Hospital:** The total number of cases (including eye cases) admitted during the year was 1364. Of these 1250 were cured and discharged, 64 were relieved and discharged otherwise, 21 died and 29 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases was 2146.

**Nanda Baba Eye Hospital:** The Eye Hospital is a special feature of the Sevashrama. It was established in the year 1913 by Seth Sri Banaridas Bhagwandas and Seth Sri Pahladrai Rameshwardas of Bombay, two great devotees of Nanda Baba, and is since then being maintained mainly by them. As diseases of the eye are very common, particularly in the villages adjoining Vrindavan, this Department has proved itself to be a great boon to the rural population. The reputation of marked success in eye operations has widely spread, and many patients from far-off places come here for treatment.

**Outdoor Dispensary:** The total number of new cases treated during the year was 23,966 and the total number of repeated cases was 63,892 as against 21,707 and 34,553 respectively in 1947. The total number of surgical cases including those of the Eye Department was 1,333. During the year under report there was a total increase of 38,593 cases over the cases of the preceding year. One of the main reasons for this heavy increase is the influx of refugee patients.

**X-Ray Department:** The X-Ray plant purchased in 1947 through the unselfish efforts of Seth Sri Ratansey Champai and Seth Sri Natvarlal M. Chinai of Bombay started working during the year under report. It has removed a long-felt want of Vrindavan and the surrounding localities. The total number of cases examined was 74.

**Clinical Laboratory & Inductothermy:** 754 samples of blood, urine, stool, and sputum were examined during the year in the Clinical Laboratory. 34 cases were treated by Inductothermy-therapy.

**Refugee Relief:** The total number of refugee patients admitted into the Indoor Hospital was 49 and the total number of Outdoor patients treated was 15,010.

**Finances:** The total receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 60,998-1-0 and the total expenditure was Rs. 67,644-6-3. The prices of all commodities having gone up the expenditure increased by some thousands of rupees. The Government of U.P. very kindly increased their recurring annual grant from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 6,000 for which the Sevashrama feels very grateful to them. But the finances of the Sevashrama are still far from satisfactory.

**Thanks:** The Sevashrama offers its sincere thanks to the kind donors, subscribers and sympathizers of the institution for their ungrudging help and active support to it in running this charitable institution in the face of many difficulties.

**Immediate Needs:** The Sevashrama being situated right on the bank of the Jamuna is threatened every year with floods. In 1947 the whole of the Sevashrama remained under water for about four days and all hospital activities had to be suspended for a period. Moreover, the present site of the Sevashrama is in an out-of-the-way locality. Because of its remoteness patients cannot avail themselves of its services easily and that also to the desired extent. To obviate these difficulties, it has been decided to shift the Sevashrama to a more prominent and safe site near the Mathura-Vrindavan main road. This shifting of the Sevashrama and the new construction of the Hospital buildings, etc. will necessitate very heavy expenditure, and the Sevashrama therefore appeals to the generous public kindly to contribute liberally for this purpose so that the institution may soon be shifted to its proposed site.

**Permanent Fund:** The annual expenditure of the Sevashrama amounts to Rs. 40,000 out of which it gets about Rs. 20,000 by way of grants, subscriptions etc. To raise the balance of Rs. 20,000 is a hard problem which the management of the Sevashrama have to tackle every year. It is, therefore, essential that the Permanent Fund of the Sevashrama should be considerably strengthened, so that its finances may be stabilized to a reasonable extent. Persons desirous of endowing beds in memory of their friends and relations may do so by kindly contributing Rs. 5,000 per bed.

Contributions either in cash or in kind, however small, may kindly be sent to the following addresses:

1. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur-math, Dt. Howrah, (West Bengal);
2. The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindaban, Mathura, U.P.

### THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA, KALADY

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1948

This Ashram is situated in the birthplace of the great Shankaracharya, and aims to revive the cultural tradition of that sacred place. Its chief activities are educational, all education being imparted after the manner of the Gurukula system.

In the period under report the Ramakrishna Gurukula School has been shifted to a new building, mainly meant for Harijan boys. The building for a proposed Free Public Library and Reading Room has been constructed.

Not less than eleven schools are being conducted by the Ashram, the Brahmanandodayam English, the Brahmanandodayam Sanskrit High Schools at Kalady proper, and the Vivekodayam Sanskrit High School at Eravinallor being the three most outstanding ones. Apart from these, the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukula deserves particular attention. Here the Gurukula system is strictly followed, the pupils living in close association with their teachers according to the high ideals of purity, service, and equality. No distinction at all is made on the basis of creed, caste, or religion.

There are three libraries. One of them, the Sri Vivekananda Religious Library and Reading Room, containing 1400 volumes in various languages, has been opened in the new building during the period under report.

During the year, lectures and religious classes were regularly held, several articles were published in the South-Indian papers and magazines, and one book was published. The monthly magazine *Amritavani*, run by the Ashram, has entered into its third year of publication.

The Ashrama has 128 acres of arable land where intensive paddy cultivation is going on under its supervision.

Special care is taken of the Harijans. The milk-canteen has supplied milk and vitamin-tablets to some 75 poor children in the latter half of 1948.

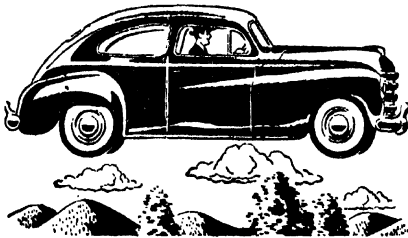
The Institution needs the support of the generous public. Due to its expanding educational activities, the Ashrama has incurred a debt of about Rs. 13,500, and its first objective is to get it cleared. It also needs funds for some urgently needed constructions and repairs.

Cordial thanks are extended to H.H. The Maharaja of Travancore, who has shown great interest and sympathy, and to other noble wellwishers who have rendered valuable aid to its sustenance.

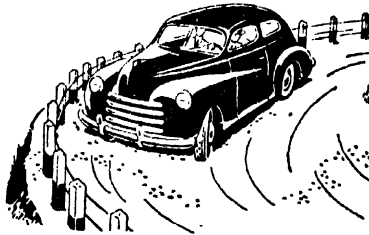
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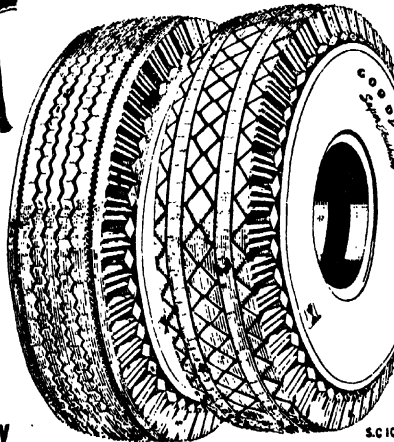


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The Board of Directors in a meeting held on 31-12-47 has decided to increase the interest of all fixed deposits by half per cent on and from 1st January, 1948. They have further decided that the benefit of this increase of interest is to be extended to all existing depositors of the Bank.

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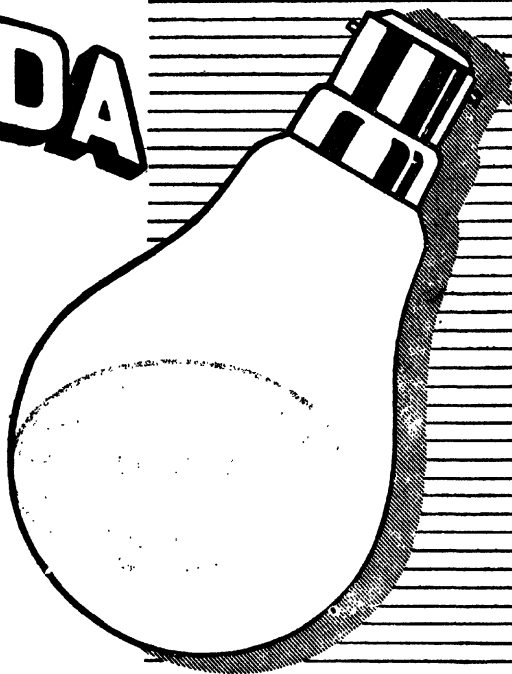
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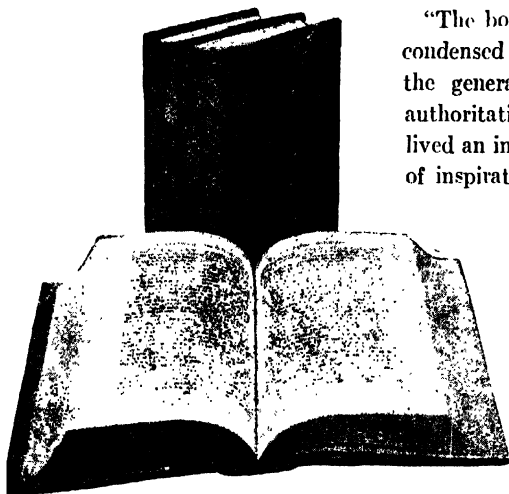
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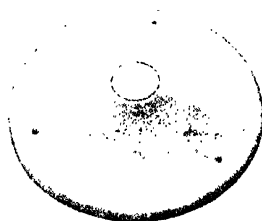
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